

RELIGION AND LIFE:

EIGHT ESSAYS,

AND AN ESSAY ON

MODERN RELIGIOUS

DEVELOPMENTS.

By VARIOUS WRITERS

EDITED BY

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following Essays require only a few words of introduction.

Each of the writers approaches the subject with which he has dealt from the standpoint of those who have, in one way or other, been trained in that form of theology which is known as Unitarianism. Two of them are laymen, the others either are, or were until recently, ministers.

In its strictly etymological sense, the word, "Unitarianism," signifies a denial of the doctrine of the Trinity, and an affirmation of the Unity of God. Far more than this, however, is now involved in the appellation. Unitarianism implies as well other negations as other affirmations, which would not be understood by a simple reference to the derivative meaning of the term. In this respect the word resembles many another name, given in the first instance to describe some peculiar doctrine or particular principle of action. A name is often taken by, or bestowed on, a political or religious party having a very narrow significance, which, in process of time, loses this, and acquires a fresh and wider meaning. "Protestantism" originally expressed the position taken by those who in 1529 protested against the decree of the Diet, which in that year met at Spires, declaring all changes in religion to be unlawful, it has a larger meaning now. On the other hand, the very reverse of this sometimes occurs, and we find such a word as "Catholic," originally designed, and even now occasionally used to mean "universal," applied in a narrow and sectarian sense.

In this way Unitarianism has gradually acquired a larger significance than originally attached to it. Without attempting to place a limit on all that is implied when we say that a man is a Unitarian, I would say that it indicates a habit of mind, or rather a mental attitude towards Religion, which leads those who have it to adopt certain views, and hold certain beliefs

about God and Christ, and the life beyond the grave, which cannot fail to influence their actions in the life that now is.

This is not the place to trace the development of Unitarian doctrine, but it will be useful if a slight indication be given of some of the underlying principles which, throughout their history, have possessed Unitarians, and which have helped to establish that mental attitude to which reference has already been made. One of these is *Freedom of Thought*, and another is its correlative, the *Right and Duty of Private Judgment*. There is no claim here to ignore the ordinary rules of thought, or to use language in other than its plain customary sense. But Unitarians do claim that thought is not to be bound, and individuals are not to be prevented from expressing what they think, by the authority of a Pope, a Council, a Book, or a Statute. Indeed, they have constantly protested against men being subjected to any sort of social ostracism or legal disability by reason of the opinions they hold, religious or irreligious.

Another principle influencing Unitarian thought is that *Truth must be supreme*. While men's conceptions of Truth will differ, such differences mostly arise from limitations of knowledge. Towards all new truth, or, rather, all new light which is shed upon truth, Unitarians adopt an attitude of welcome. They do not get alarmed if this should upset previously conceived theories, or make it necessary to reconstruct their theology. For this reason they have jealously refused to entomb within the four corners of a creed the beliefs which they entertain, and endeavoured to prevent one generation from imposing its limitations upon those which were to succeed it, holding that by taking such a course a barrier is set up against new knowledge, non-essentials become confused with essentials, and Truth itself suffers,

The older Unitarians grounded much of their theology upon the Bible, or on certain texts therein; consequently, in some of the older handbooks will be found a justification of the Unitarian position, and a refutation of that of the Orthodox, based

entirely on a number of Scriptural passages, or a re-interpretation of some others. A contest about texts and their interpretation naturally made them desire to see that the Bible should be as correctly rendered into modern languages as possible, and hence it was that from time to time attempts were made both publicly and privately to secure this accuracy. This begat an attitude towards the Bible which is now to be seen not only among Unitarians, but among the most enlightened and progressive Orthodox sects, the latter having, consciously or unconsciously, adopted the line of argument laid down by the former. It is now almost a common-place that the same methods of criticism are to be applied to the Bible as would be used with respect either to the sacred literature of other religions, or to the literature of Greece and Rome, but it is mainly due to Unitarians that this has become a common place.

Mere textual controversy, using that expression in its old sense, is not, however, very frequent the issues are far deeper than that. The questions which concern Biblical critics now relate to the authorship, the date, and the historical accuracy of the various Books of the Bible. Upon the proper solution of these depends, in a great measure, the weight which is to be attached to the utterances of Psalmist, Prophet, and Historian. Those who have been trained to regard the Bible as the direct outcome of Divine inspiration must necessarily regard such criticism as destructive but to Unitarians all criticism which aims to get at the real facts, so far from being destructive, is welcomed as constructive. In the early part of this century the Unitarian Channing, wrote "The Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men, and its meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books."* Writing towards the close of the century, another Unitarian—W C Gannett—who has learned much of the modern spirit, and is, in some quarters, regarded as a dangerously advanced man, is able to write "The Bible is going to be more to

* Discourse on *Unitarian Christianity* at Baltimore in 1819.

" the Liberals [in religion] at the end of the nineteenth century
 " than it has been at any time since its beginning. It grew so
 " shallow as the Book of God ! But it has grown so deep as the
 " Book of Man " *

Another principle strongly held by Unitarians has been that *Character is more important than Creed*. This leads them to regard the present life as a state of education and preparation for, or progress towards, another. It makes them put the emphasis on the ethical side of Christianity. It induces them to pay far more attention to the conduct of men than to their professed beliefs, and it causes them, therefore, to regard with some suspicion the attitude of those who are constantly urging the necessity of faith in Christ, or of believing on him. So far from regarding doubt as a sign of moral obliquity, they see, with Tennyson, " more faith in honest doubt than in half the " creeds." It is this toleration which makes Unitarians hold out a friendly hand to all seekers after truth, even when these have not arrived at the same standpoint as themselves, or, perhaps, have gone beyond it.

In the doctrines of the *Fatherhood of God* and the *Brotherhood of Man* Unitarians have found much to justify their attitude towards those who would limit the infinite love and pity of God, and their persistent advocacy of these doctrines, and their protest against the harsh Calvinism which, at one time, dominated much of the theology of the Protestant churches, are largely responsible for the humaner views now prevailing in an enlightened Christendom. The moral revolt against the doctrine of an infinite punishment for a finite sin, which found expression in the writings of Channing, has always been maintained by Unitarians, and this has spread to others who refuse to be known by that name.

The appeal to *Reason in Religion* is another characteristic of modern Unitarians. Authority has to them no meaning, unless it can justify itself to their reasoning faculties. They do

* From a short Tract, *A Blessing on the Day*

, not desire to ignore those great human possessions, such as Love, Affection, Reverence, Sympathy, and the like, or to say that, in arriving at any conclusion, reason is to dispense with the light that these may shed, but they do regard reason as superior to simple feeling. No doubt this begets a critical attitude towards almost all questions, whether religious, social, or political. It is sometimes charged against Unitarians that they are too critical, but most of them would prefer to be so charged rather than to have it said of them that they were too credulous. As a matter of fact, neither charge is strictly accurate. That they decline to accept a statement simply because it is made "on authority" is probably true but they would not, on the other hand, reject it for the same reason. They would desire to test the authority first, and the test they would use would be pretty much the same in each case.

It will be readily understood that those trained in the atmosphere of thought in which these principles prevail will view Religion, and all matters pertaining to it, very differently from those who have been brought up under directly opposite influences. The subjects which are dealt with in this volume will naturally present themselves in a very different aspect to the Unitarian and to the Orthodox of whatever type, though, possibly, to some extent there may be a common assent between them. There has been no intention on the part of the writers of these Essays to offer a statement of Unitarian doctrine, and any who go to them with the object of ascertaining this will be disappointed. But those who wish to see what are the matured and careful opinions of men, trained under Unitarian influences, upon subjects closely connected with Religion and Life, will be able to judge how far they differ from the more popular, numerically speaking, religious bodies. It may be that it will be found that there is a closer consensus of opinion than might have been supposed. If this be so, I suggest that it is because there has been for some time past a breaking down of old barriers and an onward movement, which has brought

some of those who occupied a position in the rear closer to the van.

I am very far from asserting, and I do not suppose that any of the writers who have contributed to this volume would assert, that the views they express are the sole possession of Unitarians. It is a matter for rejoicing to know that in many of the orthodox churches the importance of a righteous life is insisted upon as superior to correctness of belief, that there has been a gradual tendency to discard those views of God which pictured Him as an awful Ruler, enforcing His will through appeals to fear, and to substitute for these a presentation of Him as a loving Father, that the doctrine of Everlasting Punishment does not hold the place it did, and that the doctrine of the Atonement is in many churches no longer so presented as to offend the moral sense. This modification of the older orthodoxy, and the consequent change of attitude towards many subjects upon which Religion has a considerable bearing, are largely due to the labours of Unitarians, and to the criticisms they have, in the past, felt it their duty to make upon some of the doctrines and practices of those from whom they differed.

It must be borne in mind that in these Essays nothing like an exhaustive treatment of the various subjects dealt with has been attempted. To do this would require separate treatises. It remains further to be pointed out that each writer is responsible for his own Essay only. There has been no attempt made to define Religion. Such definitions are generally defective, representing just so much as those who make them think necessary for their purpose. Yet it will be found that, without any such definition having been made or aimed at, there is very little difference in the minds of those who have undertaken to consider Religion in its relation to some of the affairs of Life. As a contribution towards a solution of some of the difficulties and problems which surround these subjects, these Essays are now offered to the public.

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I.

RELIGION AND THEOLOGY.

By JAMES DRUMMOND, M.A., LL.D.

(Principal of Manchester New College, Oxford).

IN recent years there has been, among a large class of cultivated men, a growing impatience of theological questions; and this impatience is not confined to those who have satisfied themselves that Religion is the baseless fabric of a dream, but is felt also by many who retain the old feelings of devotion and reverence, and wish to see the practical life of the world interpenetrated with the spirit of Religion. In the present essay I must disregard the former class, and assume that my readers, whether they care for Theology or not, have still a living interest in Religion, and desire both to secure for it a more exalted power in themselves, and to extend its influence in society. To such persons the position which Theology ought to occupy can hardly be a question of indifference; or one of only theoretical importance. Under Christianity goodness and truth have always claimed to go hand in hand; and if the decay of faith is not always succeeded by a decay of

character, if there have been men of noble and disinterested lives who have disowned all religious belief, still it is a matter of not uncharitable observation that, taking men in the mass, religious doubt is apt to paralyse the higher activities, and render the tone and impression of the life lower and more earthly. And surely it is no secret that under the pressure of doubt numbers of men are feeling that Religion is slipping from them, that the radiance of a Divine beauty is fading from the universe, that human life is sinking to a lower and more sordid level, and that they themselves, however unwillingly, are in fact without hope and without God in the world. This state of mind, which may be agonising, is due to theological change, to the loss of the old intellectual props of faith, and the presence of unanswered problems. I think, therefore, that I am dealing with practical interests, interests which are twined about the deepest life of our hearts, in offering some remarks upon the relation between Religion and Theology.

The loss of interest in Theology among religious people is due to several causes.

We may notice in the first place the exaggerated importance attached to Theology by the Christian Church, which has led to a not unnatural, if not always reasonable, re-action. Early ecclesiastical Christianity may be roughly described as a combination of Hebrew religion and Greek philosophy. The Hebrew prophets did not reduce their belief to precise

propositions, and state its speculative grounds ; but, rising into immediate communion with God, they flung forth the burning convictions of their souls in the rich figures and glowing phrase of poetry. To a great extent Christ himself followed this example. His teaching is indeed full of profoundest thoughts ; but they are not stated with dialectical precision, or organised into a system. They are expressed in popular language, and sometimes presented in the form of a striking figure, sometimes expanded into a parable. Choose what example you will of Christ's teaching, though it be from the Fourth Gospel, and it stands in sharp contrast with the dry formulæ and reasoned discussions of the theologian ; for it was clearly his object to pierce to the hidden sources of faith within the soul, and cause them to flow with a new life, rather than to satisfy the curiosity of the intellect. The controversies of the Apostolical age first gave rise to formal statements, which might be regarded as the watchwords of different parties ; and yet how slight is the resemblance between the Epistles and a theological treatise. They deal with large spiritual principles, rather than with precise definitions and coherent systems of thought. They address themselves to the practical needs of the hour, and furnish the raw material of Theology rather than Theology itself, for the writers are not following the lines of a speculative philosophy, or spelling out at second hand what may be learned from the writings of more inspired men, but are bearing witness to what

they have seen and known in a spiritual experience of remarkable originality and force. It is this higher element in the Epistles which has given them their permanent place in religious literature, and made them a word of life to all succeeding generations of Christians; for, as we shall see, theologies fade and die; but the Word of God, which speaks, not through the individual intellect, but through the deep heart of humanity, abides for ever.

But all this underwent a perilous change when Christianity was fully transplanted to Grecian soil, and men trained in the methods of Greek philosophy began to press into the Church. Such men not only sought for argumentative grounds on which to rest their faith, but they desired to attain to something higher than faith itself, namely, knowledge (gnosis); that is to say, they were unwilling to accept the doctrines of their religion on mere authority, and wished to discover and establish their connection with the whole range of truth, and with the laws of reason. This tendency, carried to an extreme, led to the great outburst of heresy known as Gnosticism, which convulsed the Church in the second century; and seldom has the exercise of reason in Religion produced so strange a mass of fantastic speculation, which endeavoured to render intelligible the transition from the Infinite Being into the finite forms of the universe, and to reconcile the sovereignty of absolute goodness with the presence of evil in the world. Catholic Christianity was thus put upon its

* defence within the confines of the Church itself, and was compelled to define its creed with greater precision, and to support it by arguments which appealed to men's intelligence and knowledge. When once the intellect of Greece was started upon this track, it pressed on from point to point, solving question after question with ever increasing subtlety, finding no metaphysical flight too lofty for its pinions to essay, no distinctions too delicate for its analysis to expose.

Thus, in the course of centuries, was evolved that vast system of dogmas which has ever since been recognised as orthodox ; and we ought never to forget that, though the ore from which it has been fashioned may have been hewn from mountains reared by the hand of God, the system itself has been wrought and shaped upon the anvil of human reason, and that its wisest defenders, so far from admitting that it is irrational, regard it as the highest expression of reason in Religion. And in truth, its great defect is that it has drawn off the attention from spiritual vitality to intellectual assent, and by interposing a system of thought too complex and obscure has often extinguished the light which it undertook to focus and define.

We must not, however, be unjust to these early theologians. If they imported into Christianity too large a share of Greek speculation, still the questions which they attempted to solve were connected, not only with the highest subjects of thought, but with the vital interests of Religion. Let us take a single

example—the doctrine of the person of Christ. The life and teaching of Jesus had left upon his disciples a profound impression of more than human sanctity, and they believed that they had heard from him the words of eternal truth, and seen in him the clearest manifestations of the Divine Spirit, so that, through communion with him, they themselves were redeemed from the trammels of sin, and raised into fellowship with God. The nearness of God to man, the intimate life of God in man, of man in God, and the possibility of attaining to a sinless purity in which all that was undivine in human nature should be purged away—this was the grand ideal of life which, appearing to be guaranteed by faith in Christ, entered into conflict with the corruption of Greece and Rome. For a time it was sufficient to express this faith by calling Jesus the Son of God, without attempting any precise definition of the term. The reconciliation, the unity of God and man as father and child, was the central spiritual fact which the believer cherished in his heart. Here, then, was a touchstone of doctrine. Everything which obscured or denied this relationship must be rejected as opposed to the fundamental postulate of Christianity.

Now it was, in fact, exposed to two forms of denial, which rested on the same fundamental principle. The finite, the material, the human were, in many quarters, supposed to be too corrupt for any immediate indwelling of the Divine. God was far away in the distant heaven, and the world of sin and sorrow

went on without him, having at best some message containing his commands, which men, if they chose, might obey. This state of mind led, on one side, to a denial of everything divine in Christ. He was simply human, entrusted indeed with a new message from God, but not harmonising in his own person the human and divine. Thus the life of communion with God vanished at a blow; and instead of being an inward spirit of divine quickening, Christianity fell to the rank of a new law, which men might accept and obey if they would.

On the other hand, it was admitted that Christ was undoubtedly divine; but then, if divine, not human. The Christ had merely taken up a temporary lodging in Jesus, in order to deliver the divine message, and then left him before the crucifixion; or, by a still stranger flight of imagination, it was alleged that the whole life of Jesus was only a phantasm, that he was not a man at all, but the empty semblance of a man, through which the Divine made itself manifest to the world. Thus again Christianity was robbed of its power, and man left in hopeless separation from God. To the early Christian, therefore, these appeared to be far more than speculative errors. They denied the primary experience of the Christian heart, and struck at the very roots of Christian hope. It was necessary for Theology to come to the rescue, and show that these views were opposed to the fundamental facts of Christianity. But in doing this it was obliged to

define its own doctrine of the person of Christ, and it finally arrived at the decision that the human and the divine natures were inseparably united in one person.

This seemed the inevitable result of rejecting the two contrasted errors; and if we are able to throw ourselves back into this ancient controversy, and place ourselves amid the conditions of thought and knowledge under which it was conducted, we shall perhaps conclude that it could not have been decided more wisely. But, alas! the tendency of prolonged controversy is to draw off the attention from the spiritual principles out of which it originally sprang, and to fix it on the intellectual forms for which the antagonists on each side desire to score a victory. Each definition started new problems, which required to be fenced against attack by further formulæ; and so the weary war of words went on, evil passions became excited; the acceptance of the dominant creed was deemed more important than righteousness; the sword of the civil power was invoked, and orthodoxy was established upon the ruins of Christian charity, while that divine life of communion with the Eternal Love, which had at last been made secure in the prison of a creed, had vanished from the heart of Christendom.

A somewhat similar state of things arose out of the Reformation. Conflicting sects were obliged to formulate their confessions of faith, and the rage of mutual opposition found vent in fierce persecutions

and sanguinary wars. The echoes of the ancient cries are still sounding, and the bitterness of strife has not yet wholly yielded to the meekness and gentleness of Christ. But from time to time, throughout the Christian centuries, there were quiet and loving souls that longed to withdraw from the din of battle, and lose themselves once more in that calm and blessed life with God which Christianity brought into the world. How much better, they thought, to live in this rapt communion, and to manifest the Christ within by Christly deeds and words, than to conquer in some intellectual tournament, and to crucify Christ by persecuting his foes. Thus, at the present day, there is a re-action against the exaggerated claims of Theology. Many religious people are tired of the unending fight, and look upon Theology as the symbol of prejudice, dogmatism, and cruelty, and they would turn from it to the more important questions of practical righteousness, and brotherly love among men.

Other causes of the loss of interest in Theology must be noticed very briefly. They have, indeed, been partly anticipated in the foregoing remarks.

Theology by itself seems incapable of producing religious life. The keenest theologian is not always the best Christian, and zeal for the creed is not invariably accompanied by zeal for duty. Intellectual assent and spiritual faith are two different things, and dogmatic confidence may be only a cloak or an unbelieving heart. Why, then, should we

distress ourselves about these empty forms of thought, the pale ghosts of a dead faith, whose icy fingers chill us, and who have no speculation in their hollow eyes? We want the living realities of to-day, the beauteous angels of a God who has not forgotten us.

Again, the spirit of persecution, which has been so lamentably associated with Theology, has alienated the sympathies of many thoughtful men from a study by which it seems to be engendered. The diabolical tortures of the Middle Ages have been abolished, but rather by the force of the civil power than through the penitence of theologians; and this evil spirit of anti-Christ lingers on, suggesting unkind thoughts and harsh judgments against men on account of opinions which are held in all good conscience. In this direction the influence of Theology appears to be simply bad, rousing the malignant passions, and cutting us off from that inward life of love without which we cannot know God. The *odium theologicum* has become proverbial; but who ever heard of the *caritas theologica*?

A cause of a very different kind is the transference of interest to other problems. It seems as though succeeding generations of men were swayed by some dominant motive, which gradually wears itself out, and is replaced by an indifference proportionate to the excitement which it once produced. We are, for the most part, without that breadth of thought and that largeness of sympathy which would make

every subject of human interest attractive, and enable us to set each in its proper place, and preserve its just relation to all the rest; and we are apt to yield ourselves to "the spirit of the age," that partial and temporary tyrant, who often, with grand airs of superior wisdom, drags us whither we would not. Thus, theological controversies, which once flamed with desolating fascination over whole countries, present to us only the dismal barrenness of extinct volcanoes. We wonder how men ever cared for such things; and we turn impatiently from the contemplation of theoretic truth to the practical questions of social well-being. Theology, we say, created a kingdom of hell rather than a kingdom of God; we will have none of it, but by wise legislation and active charity bring in at last the reign of righteousness and peace.

One other most potent cause remains. New knowledge is sapping the old foundations. The temple of Truth, indeed, still rises before our eyes in all its majestic symmetry, and we are assured that it stands upon an "impregnable rock"; but in spite of this assurance we fear that scientific skill has honeycombed the rock with explosive mines, and that the whole edifice may vanish in a night, like some fabled palace of oriental imagination. Men's hearts are yielding to despair; and when they ought to be grappling strongly with the new problems of thought, they exclaim—with a cry of pain—that it is futile to attempt to penetrate the

dread mystery of God, and, instead of seeking an unattainable truth, we must be content to do our duty here with stoical determination, and be prepared for whatever may befall when this mortal life is over.

From these several causes Theology has fallen into disrepute among a considerable number of those who may be roughly described as liberals in Religion. But, as they too must have an intellectual justification, and a formula appropriate to their position, they are fond of dwelling on a very true distinction between Theology and Religion. Either, they say, may be held without the other, and I think I have even heard men boasting that they had no doctrines, while yet they claimed to be religious. Religion, they say, is love of God and man; let us cherish this and trouble ourselves no more about the creeds. The solution is a simple one, and to many it may have brought the needed relief. If it can be made good, it will save us from a vast amount of labour and anxiety. The problems at which the mightiest intellects, fired with a divine enthusiasm, have toiled, the sublime and pathetic facts before which saints have bowed with weeping penitence and awe, will be swept into the limbo of forgetfulness, and we shall hail the advent of a Christianity which requires no historical evidence, and has cast off the dark perplexities of metaphysics. But in the midst of our exultation some Catholic interposes, and assures us that all Religion rests ultimately upon dogma; for

even if you are content with its most attenuated form, and limit it to the love of God and man, still this implies the dogma that God exists. Thus, Theology begins to raise its head once more, and we are even threatened with a return of metaphysics, which we had so happily driven away. There is, I think, an element of truth in both of these opposite contentions, and we must endeavour to determine with some precision the relations between them.

That Religion and Theology admit of a true and clear distinction few will be disposed to deny. But as the word religion is used in different senses, it is necessary to explain the meaning which must be attached to it in this connection. We constantly employ the term to denote any great system of belief and practice which relates to the higher life of men. Thus, when we speak of the Christian religion, the Jewish religion, the Mohammedan religion, we are thinking more of public creed and ceremonial, things open to observation and description, than of that unseen life in the heart of individuals from which the creed and ceremonial must have ultimately sprung. In this case Theology is distinguished from Religion only as a part from the whole; and in any account which we may give of the religions of the world their theology must take a leading place. But we may use the word in a more limited sense, to denote a form of the interior life, that force within us which has given rise to creeds and worship. I need not attempt to describe what

admits of no precise description. Every religious man will know, from his own experience, what is meant; and without the inward experience words would be only the empty symbols of an unknown quantity. We are conscious of a mental condition which we call religious, to distinguish it from other mental conditions, of which we are equally conscious, such as the intellectual, the beneficent, the selfish, the worldly, the avaricious, the irascible. We associate with it such words as reverence, love, holiness, faith, trust, hope, devoutness, penitence, peace. It is in this sense of an inward life, a power in the human spirit known only to consciousness, that Religion is distinct from Theology. Theology is the formal and scientific treatment of this inward Religion, and of the various questions to which it gives rise, and it is at least conceivable that either might exist without the other. A man might learn much of Theology from books, and even through his ability and scholarship render important services in some of its branches, and yet not be a religious man. And on the other hand, a man might be profoundly religious, and yet, from want of intellectual aptitude, never bestow a thought upon Theology; and indeed the very closeness and constancy of his religion might prevent him from fixing his attention upon it, and wishing to subject it to analysis and definition.

Now, those who are fond of calling attention to this distinction between Religion and Theology, and

^ regard it as the solution of all our difficulties, very properly insist that Religion is the primary and essential thing. It is deeply planted in human nature, and, though it may seem to perish for a time, it blooms again like flowers in spring, when the winter of scepticism is past. It is this that we must tenderly nourish in our own and others' hearts, this that will bind men together in the unity of the Spirit. But Theology, it is said, so far from fostering this inward life, is always enticing men's attention away from the one thing needful, and boldly asserting its own supremacy. It has torn Christendom to pieces with unholy strife ; it has inflamed the passions of arrogance and cruelty, and thus, with parricidal hand, it has strangled its own parent, and laid Religion in the dust. Now, therefore, let us turn to the inward life with God, and escape from the babel of the theologians.

Nevertheless, there is some ground for the assertion that Religion is based upon dogma. Religion always involves some kind of belief, and this belief is logically prior to the feeling of love or devotion which is associated with it. Earnest attempts have been made, in the supposed interests of Religion, to strip it of this element of belief ; for belief rests upon evidence ; evidence is always more or less uncertain ; and thus Religion is handed over to endless argument and discussion. If, on the contrary, Religion be confined to the department of feeling, if it be nothing more than a form of our own consciousness, then it

will be complete within ourselves, and nothing can possibly assail it. But I fear that this endeavour to detach Religion from everything extraneous to ourselves only dissipates its energies, and makes it the weak and shapeless product of our changing moods, instead of a strong and definite authority, which conquers our reluctance, and moulds us into the divine ideal of our being. The attempt, moreover, although it may succeed in dissolving the images of our faith into cloud-land, cannot escape from the clinging necessity for belief.

Schleiermacher, with his profound spiritual thought and keen analysis, reduced Religion to the absolute sense of dependence, which was complete within the consciousness, and never absent from any waking moment of human life. It is a thought which may supply food for reflection, and be made fruitful in many ways, but it does not succeed in separating Religion from belief. For you cannot have an absolute sense of dependence without believing in something on which you depend as the ultimate ground of your being, and forthwith the flood-gates of metaphysics are opened. If, with less rigorous thought, we reduce Religion to even lower terms, and say that it is religious to stand in awe before the mystery of the universe, even this implies a belief that there is a universe, and, moreover, that there is something connected with it which ought to inspire one with awe. Mystery, in the sense of that which is entirely unknown, can have no such effect, for it leaves every

possibility open, so that the universe might be nothing more than a mad and baleful dance of molecules, and in that case we might be greatly alarmed, but could have no religious awe towards it.

Religion, then, involves belief; and I suppose that the wish to separate the two is only the resource of an age of doubt, in which men in their despair are unwilling to admit that their religion is gone when their faith is dead. And, in truth, it is not gone. The ancient force still works within the heart, putting out feelers, if haply it may find God; but it must in time either perish of inanition, or gather together some new beliefs with which to re-kindle and sustain its fading fires.

But though Religion involves belief, it does not follow that it is founded upon dogma. Here we must be careful to define our terms, for much of the misunderstanding between opposing schools is owing to the use of terms in different senses. We must, for the sake of clearness, distinguish belief, doctrine, and dogma. The belief is that which is within the mind itself, and can have no existence apart from the man who believes. The doctrine is the formal and exact statement of that belief. The dogma is the doctrine when ratified and imposed by some constituted authority. This being so, it is evident that doctrines might be widely believed, as in fact the teachings of science are, without ever being turned into dogmas; and I think we may go further and say that a belief might be very strongly held, and yet the man who held it

might, from intellectual or other deficiencies, be incapable of turning it into a doctrine, and, if he made the attempt, might fail to convey any adequate notion of what was really in his mind. We might, therefore, assent to the proposition that Religion rested on belief, and yet deny that it rested upon dogma.

We must now take a further step. If belief can exist without a doctrine, much more can Religion exist without a Theology; for Theology is a system of doctrines, arranged in their due connection and subordination, and established by rational proof. A man might believe in God, and have a perfect trust in His goodness, and yet the arguments of the theologians might be utterly unintelligible to him. He might be touched to the quick by the life of Christ, and love and follow him even unto death, and yet have no theory which he could defend about his person or his work. He might value his Bible, and find in it comfort and strength for daily life, and yet know nothing of its origin, and have no doctrine of inspiration that a clever debater could not tear to pieces in a moment. It is therefore unjust to assume that, when a religious man speaks of Theology in slighting words, and maintains that Religion is in no need of doctrines or metaphysics, he is therefore attacking belief, and wishing to volatilize Religion into vague sentimentalism. It may be that he has observed faith lying crushed under the burden of intellectual forms, and doubtful propositions usurping the throne of God; and he would call men back from these

to the instinctive beliefs of the pure and loving heart. The more we trust our friend, and are joined to him in communion of soul, the less do we care to analyse his qualities and define our relations, and we are only pained by proofs that he is honest and genial. And so, if we rested in God with a perfect love, we should ask for no volumes of evidences, for we should have the witness in ourselves, and the stilted propositions of the theologian would sound as a strange and cold language. In such a case the shrinking from Theology is due, not to the weakness, but to the strength of faith.

This is a result which we must gladly welcome. It is surely a happy thing for mankind that Religion does not depend on theological knowledge for its existence; for Theology is a vast and difficult science, beset at every step with problems of great complexity; and it is obvious that an immense majority of men would find it impossible, if for no other reason, through want of time, to reach Religion in this way. Here, I think, we encounter the best plea for dogma. The dogma serves to give form and definiteness to the belief; and there can be no doubt that the form of the belief affects the character of the religion, producing every variety, from the most grovelling and immoral superstition up to the holiest and most spiritual worship. Dogma throws into a convenient and precise shape the truth which Theology is supposed to establish; and those who are unable to follow the theologian in his long and

intricate investigations can understand and accept his results.

We follow an analogous course in other subjects. We all believe, through the operation of ordinary experience, and without any training, in the reality of a world around us. But this belief, though fundamentally correct, may be associated with all sorts of false and mischievous notions,—astrology, alchemy, witchcraft,—besides leaving men in profound ignorance of a number of things which it would be useful to know. Then Science begins to reduce to order the beliefs generated by casual and unskilled observation, and to enlarge the boundaries of knowledge by more exact and experimental methods. But for long ages even Science rested on a fundamental error, and exhibited a false picture of the universe, grouping it around our earth as its immovable centre. Yet this error, which passed away only a few centuries ago, does not shake our faith in Science, but we contentedly allow it to shape our view of the world around us, and even to upset the belief which naturally arises from the daily spectacle of the revolving sky. Now most of us accept the teaching of Science in this and other directions purely upon authority; and I suppose no one will deny that the knowledge we may acquire of the facts and laws of nature, without being scientific men, is of great practical value. Similarly dogma may present us with results which it is good for our religious health that we should know, and which we could not work out for ourselves.

It would, I think, be impossible to resist this plea if for dogma we substituted doctrine. Science has doctrines, but it has no dogmas; and whenever its doctrines assume the authority of dogma they become mischievous, and interfere with that free and healthy working of the intellect to which Science is indebted for its achievements. If religious doctrines were taught simply as that which is most surely believed by the great majority of religious men who have carefully studied the subject, they would be of the highest service to the spiritual life, and Theology would once more command the respect which is fast passing away from it. Theologians, by their assumption of a preternatural authority, have lost that true authority which in every other subject is accorded to competent and instructed men. The ascription of infallibility to men like ourselves, out of which dogma has sprung, the exclusiveness, the intolerance, the pains and penalties with which dogma is associated, have inflicted untold injury upon Religion, and are responsible for much of the scepticism of the present day.

In many quarters there is an uneasy feeling that Theology cannot advance with advancing knowledge, that its foundations have been destroyed, and that professional theologians, however learned they may be, are so bound by their dogma that they are incapable of exercising an impartial judgment, and that, therefore, their judgment is practically worthless. This feeling is, I have no doubt, often

exaggerated and unjust, and the ranks of orthodoxy can produce theologians, not only of the largest scholarship, but of scrupulous impartiality and sobriety of judgment; and the notion that all wisdom is to be found in the so-called critical school appears to me to have no warrant in fact. But such exaggeration is the natural fruit of dogma, and assumption on one side creates assumption on the other. Liberate the emaciated form of Theology from its chains, let it breathe for a time the free air, and be nourished on something better than prison diet, and it will appear again in strength and beauty, and speak with the native authority of a child of God, and not, as the Scribes, with the pretended infallibility of dead parchments.

But, while admitting that a belief shaped broadly and generally by the most approved results of theological study at any given time is adequate for a religious life, and that the majority of men may be content with this, just as in so many subjects they have to be content with results, of which they cannot understand the proofs, we cannot go beyond this, and say that Religion can dispense with Theology altogether. When belief is destroyed, Religion begins to wither, and, as belief is always open to intellectual attack, it must seek for intellectual justification. But, independently of this, Religion cannot exist in intelligent minds, with leisure and taste for the problems which it suggests, without seeking to understand and define its own basis, contents, and

relations, or, in other words, without creating a Theology. We must add that the subject is so closely interwoven with the highest interests of mankind, and so intimately connected with the tone and bearing of our lives, that every man of education and intelligence must wish to have some knowledge of its rational foundation, and to possess at least such a rudimentary acquaintance with Theology as will enable him to justify to himself the religious position which he occupies. By way of illustration, let us reduce Religion to its simplest elements, and we shall see that, as soon as the intellect begins to ply its questions, Theology emerges in all the vastness of its range.

Religion, let us say, not by way of exact definition, but of popular description, is love to God and man. This love, we admit, is the essential thing, the practical proof whether our religion is genuine. We will go farther, and say that he who loves abides in God, and knows God, and that this direct spiritual knowledge is infinitely more precious than the most exact theorizing. But this knowledge, beautiful in its instinctive and undoubting faith, is associated in our nature with a speculative intellect, which seeks to understand it, and insists on interrogating it. What do you mean by God? Do you mean Baal, or Jupiter, or "the God and "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?" Do you mean conscious reason and will, or a blind tendency and drift towards something which may turn out to

be morally good? Does God exist? How do you know that He is good and ought to be loved? What is His relation to the universe? What is His relation to man? Has He been teaching men through the course of history, and, if so, how? Is there any reality in inspiration? If so, what is its character? Is it miraculous, or is it an exaltation of normal experiences? Whence comes the love which we feel towards God? Can we create it by our own will, or must we wait for the operation of the Divine Grace? Can we do anything to help or resist the action of God? Has prayer any effect? Has God made any special provision for helping men in their spiritual life, and drawing them to Himself? Does Christianity provide help? How is it distinguished from other great religions? Who or what was Jesus Christ? What were the fundamental characteristics of his teaching? What is the function of the Christian Church? Has it guarded faithfully the original tradition, or must we rely solely on the Scriptures? What is the origin, what the authority of the Scriptures? What relation have they to our religious thought and life?

(These are only a sample of the questions which are involved in the first part of the proposition that Religion consists in love to God and love to man; but they are sufficient to show that we cannot shut out abstruse and difficult problems, and that if we would maintain the noblest and simplest religion in the midst of a society teeming with intellectual energy, we must

° be prepared to give a reason for the faith that is in us; in other words, we must have a theology. There will always be sweet and blameless souls, that, with the purity of child-angels, will gaze directly on the face of the Father, and know nothing of the clouds and darkness which the intellect may spread around his throne; but Religion, considered simply as one factor within a rational nature, must, like all our other native powers, seek for rational expression, and thus it will generate Theology, so that these two will always go together as the spiritual and intellectual phases of the same complex manifestation.

But though we thus find it impossible to fling Theology to the bats and owls, still we have reached a result which may be very helpful to us at the present day. It follows from all that has been said that Religion may abide, though systems of theology perish. And so it has been in fact. The realms of thought are strewn with the ruins of fallen systems; but the spirit of Religion still walks with the radiant confidence of immortal youth, and builds new shrines wherein to dwell, till these too have served their purpose. The worship of Egypt, of Babylon, of Greece, of Rome, has yielded to larger knowledge and nobler thought. And let us not forget that these old and obsolete religions had their death-pang, and suffered from the slow corrosion of scepticism, before they acknowledged the advent of a higher faith.

At the present day Religion distributes itself over

the world in great aggregates which are separated from one another by important differences, yet all provide a home where sanctity and love are content to dwell. Christianity itself has several types of Theology, but of each the spirit of Christ can make a tabernacle where the soul may meet with God. Throughout history it is the spirit that has lived through every changing form, and the disappearance of doctrines once deemed essential has left the heart of the religion untouched. But the process of change, even in the mere outworks of Theology, must always be painful to the natural conservatism of Religion; and when that which has long been regarded as the intellectual basis of faith is shattered, a period of doubt and distress must ensue. In such a period our lot is cast. For multitudes the infallible authority of Church and of Bible alike is gone, and the foundations of Religion seem crumbling into the encroaching tide of a knowledge which can discover nothing but the material and the transient. But let not our heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. There is faith in boldly meeting and grappling with these problems. Religion will not perish. They that seek shall find. God is clearing away the mists of error and preparing some new and higher manifestation of His kingdom; and they that rest in Him shall hear the witness of His spirit.

Here we might pause; but it will be advantageous to illustrate the view which we have taken by pointing out its relation to a great theological change

which is going on within the ranks of Protestant Christianity—a change which must affect profoundly, and, indeed, fundamentally, the theoretic interpretation of our religion. For a time many will persuade themselves that, though they must admit the facts, the change is not vital, and will have various means of blinding themselves to the inevitable result; while others, with more logical minds, will feel that the ground is gone from beneath their feet, and they are sinking into the waves. Can we frankly and fully admit this change, and still find Christianity a “power of God unto salvation?” This is a large question, and I can only sketch the outline of an answer.

The change to which I refer is in the doctrine of the Bible. Until comparatively recent times it was almost universally assumed by Christians that the Bible was infallible; for it had been immediately dictated by the Holy Ghost, and though it contained the productions of various writers, extending over a long period, it had in reality only one author, God. So unchallenged was this assumption that it did not even seem worth while defining it; and we are now witnessing this curious result, that the dogmatic standards allow a laxity of judgment which was not thought possible in a professing Christian. To deny the infallibility of the Bible was to be an infidel; to establish its absolute credibility in all parts was a primary duty of the apologist. It was the ultimate appeal in all controversies, and to find a single verse

in any part of it which supported a particular view^f was to stamp that view with divine authority. The prevailing opinion was very accurately expressed by a former Bishop of Manchester, at the time when Colenso was troubling the Church with inconvenient criticisms on the Pentateuch. Addressing an annual meeting of the Manchester and Salford Branch of the Church Missionary Society, he said that "he would point out this particularly to their attention that the very foundation of their faith, the very basis of their hopes, the dearest and nearest consolations were taken from them when one line of that Sacred Book on which they based everything, was declared to be unfaithful and untrustworthy."*

Probably few instructed theologians at the present time would commit themselves to this declaration, or allow that Christianity was destroyed because the world is older than the writer of Genesis supposed, because there are incredible numbers in Exodus, because the hare does not chew the cud, as is taught in Leviticus, or because the Gospels themselves are coloured by contemporary thought, and contain narratives which cannot be legitimately harmonised. Nevertheless, the apprehensions of the Bishop of Manchester were perfectly logical. If Religion is made to rest on an authority which is purely external, a single successful blow at any part of that authority, however insignificant, destroys the

* Spoken, I think, in 1864. I have a note of the words, taken from a report at the time, but have failed to note my authority.

whole; for that which is fallible in one part may be fallible in another, and, till fresh criteria of truth are brought in, everything is involved in the same uncertainty. The infallibility of the Bible was the basis of Protestant Christianity, and thus the most solemn concerns of faith and duty were bound up with a multitude of petty details; and a mistake in natural history, an error in geology, an exaggeration in a number, things of the smallest importance in themselves, caused men's hearts to tremble as at the near return of chaos. Where, they cried, are we to stop? What shall we have left? The only logical reply is, that we cannot stop anywhere, that of the old foundation, considered as an authority which we may implicitly and unreservedly trust, nothing is left. In other words, our theoretic foundation was not the true foundation. Christianity was made to rest upon a baseless hypothesis, which, the moment it is seriously tested, crumbles beneath our touch. But it does not follow that Christianity will sink into the ruins. We must learn to distinguish our theory of Christianity from Christianity itself. It is natural that when conceptions which have long satisfied our intellect are proved to be untenable, we should for a time lose our hold of the spiritual truth which was bound up with these vanishing errors; but at last we shall see that the spirit and power of Religion survive, and we are nearer to the true and abiding foundations when we have cleared away the props which human ignorance has reared.

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The inevitable result of the changed position in regard to the Bible is this, that the rights of criticism must be unreservedly admitted. We cannot pick and choose according to our own fancies. We may not doubt the scientific character of the first chapter of Genesis, and think it criminal to doubt the historical character of the first chapter of Matthew. We may not admit the presence of legendary matter in Kings, and treat a man as an infidel for believing that there is legendary matter in Acts. Moreover we cannot draw a line, and say that we will acknowledge the existence of a small quantity of error, but we will condemn as adverse to Christianity any work that strays beyond our limits, and maintains that the quantity of error is larger than we are prepared to allow. When we do so, we are practically returning to the discarded theory of infallibility. This, of course, does not imply that we are to lose all confidence in the biblical narratives, but only that we are to test them as we test other narratives of ancient events, and to determine, so far as we can, the character of the evidence by which the several statements are supported. For instance, the story of Eden, and the story of St. Paul's shipwreck, belong to two entirely distinct classes; and from the point of view of historical criticism it would be absurd to say that they must stand or fall together.

At a time when an ancient belief is breaking up there is a natural reaction; and new tools in rash and unskillful hands produce some fantastic

results. Even men of great power and genius may be led away by the attraction of new combinations, or dazzled by the splendour of their own hypotheses; and I cannot but think that the attack has often been driven much farther than a just and sober criticism will ultimately sanction. But this is a question of degree, and not of principle and method. If the Bible is not infallible, then criticism is legitimate, and unsound criticism can be answered only by criticism that is sound. When the minds of men have become accustomed to the altered position, and attack and defence are alike governed by a simple love of truth, we shall reach, as in other subjects, an average opinion, which may be held with reasonable confidence, and shall contentedly acquiesce in that element of uncertainty which always affects more or less the records of the past.

But has the Bible, then, lost its religious value, and has our childhood's veneration for it ceased to be reasonable? Are men to be cast adrift, and left to float without a compass on the restless ocean of private fancy? Are we to be driven in upon our solitary thoughts, as though we were alone with God in the midst of space, and had no inherited life, no present communion with a brotherhood of men? But what if some, on turning inwards, meet only a vision of sin and judgment? What if others are confronted by the gaunt figure of doubt, and, crying in vain for God, hear nothing but the hollow echoes

of their own voice? What if those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and have some gift of spiritual discernment, nevertheless find that self exercises such a tyrannous sway that their hearts cannot reflect the pure and perfect image of God, and they would lean on some holier soul, whom God has filled with his light and love? There may be some who have no such feelings, but find within the compass of their own nature a shrine where the Spirit is always seen and heard, and who want no one to tell them of the Father. These are they who walk in lonely beauty, touched to finest issues, and drawing men by the sweet purity of their lives, but they are very few, and they have not always that sympathy by which they can come down to the feeble ruins of a suffering and sinful humanity, in order to build up the old waste places, and prepare a city of God. Most men have a religious nature which, being weak and undeveloped, requires guidance and culture. It may be only a haunting fear of the supernatural, when the distraction of earthly pleasure is still, and want and death stand grimly before them. It may be the yearning of a heart that beats for nobler things than eye has seen, or ear has heard. It may be the struggle of thought towards the infinite, the endeavour of a spiritual reason to pass behind phenomena, and rest in the Reality which cannot change. But at best our minds are like April skies, now glowing with radiance, as though the vernal glory could never

fade ; now flecked with clouds, which, as they chase one another, allow only intermittent rays to shine between ; and again darkened with storm, which, with vehement passion, shuts out the light of God. A soul stronger and wiser than our own can help us ; a communion wider than our individual life may lead us into a fuller truth.

Hence the value of the Bible becomes apparent. It appeals to the latent religion in us, and through history, poetry, prophecy, and epistle awakens our slumbering spirit. Faith ceases to be an intellectual confidence in the infallibility of a book, and becomes an assent of the heart and conscience to what is felt to be good and true. The witness is within ourselves, although it may be the words of others that have caused us to hear his voice, even as a silent string is made vocal when an accordant note is struck elsewhere. Nor do we accept the truth once for all as a thing extraneous and complete, as we may learn a proposition in Euclid or in a creed ; for spiritual truth is more a matter of discernment than of intellectual belief, and glows or fades according as our organ of discernment is strong or weak. Hence we require a constant renewal and strengthening of our inward life ; and this life comes to us from the fulness of the Father, not only directly through the gift of his Spirit, but indirectly through his human children. To worship God, *solus cum solo*, is our most exalted act ; but it is only one side of our religion, for he has bound us to one another in a

religious brotherhood, and endowed the few for the benefit of the many. The saints and martyrs touch our hearts with a feeling that is religious ; for what we venerate in them is not only their human faithfulness, but the Divine Spirit by which they were animated, and the holy awe and love with which we regard them are in themselves an increase of religious vitality. These sentiments are, among Christians, gathered to a focus in a way which I suppose is unique in the world's history. With one accord the saints and martyrs look with humble and thankful reverence to one supreme figure, who has impressed upon the world the idea of Divine Sonship, and more than any other has been the quickener of his brethren, filling them, through the mysterious power of spiritual love, with his own God-given life.

A formula has been often used of late, against which I must enter my humble protest. It is said that we are to have the religion *of* Jesus, but not a religion *about* him, and still less a religion of which he shall be in any sense an object. That we may at last have his religion, and be so filled with his life as to kneel side by side with him in the same adoring worship, is indeed the goal of our aspiration ; but most of us feel that it is now far otherwise with us, and we are not fit to sit down in the goodly company of his chosen ones ; and how, we ask, are we ever to reach his religion if we are not instructed about him, and do not place ourselves

under the subduing spell of his spirit? Certainly those who have grown gray in the daily consciousness of his spiritual quickening, to whom he has been the centre of memory and of hope, who cannot think of the Father without thinking of the Beloved through whom he has manifested his Fatherhood, who cannot pray without at least the silent consecration of remembered words and deeds of his, cannot turn him out of their hearts, and say, we are even as thou, and we need thee no more.

But then, it is said, he had no Christ to whom he could look up, and thus our religion will be different from his. Be it so. I see no evidence that we were all meant to stand on the same religious level; rather are there infinite gradations, and God has made us mutually dependent, that our communion with one another may be not only earthly and interested, but spiritual, self-sacrificing and grateful. So far as there are relations between us at all, the follower cannot be as the leader, the lower as the higher, the struggling victim of sin as the conquering lord of righteousness, the redeemed as he who has redeemed him. Still this does not prevent the same life from flowing down from the higher into the lower, the spirit of the Son from taking captive the heart of the slave; only we cannot forget the order of our relations, or cease to love, with even a religious reverence, him from whom we continually draw, fresh light and warmth. To those, of course, who have no such feeling the foregoing remarks will be

without meaning. I am speaking at present for those who have them, and wish to reconcile them with a changed theology.

Now we owe our knowledge of Christ to the writings of the New Testament. It is true that the type of life which is characteristically Christian might conceivably have been handed down by tradition from generation to generation, and it is in fact continually reproduced in living form by those who have drunk most deeply of the Christian spirit. But if we had no early records to check the tradition, I believe the original impression would, in course of time, have been irrecoverably lost, and our spiritual experience would long since have ceased to be moulded by the spirit of the founder of our religion. This, then, is the inestimable value of the Scriptures of the New Testament, that they bring us under the influence of one whom to know and love is to have a new power of life within the heart. But for this purpose infallibility is not required. The main features of Christ's ministry and the main drift of his teaching admit of no reasonable doubt; and if we add to the Gospels the other writings which exhibit the earliest workings of his influence, we receive an impression of love, of faith, of duty, of holiness, of union with God, which may have some vagueness of outline, and betray differences in the media through which it comes to us, but which is massive in its grandeur and unmistakable in its characteristic

qualities. For the due understanding of this great personality it matters not if errors, such as are incident to all human narratives, have become mingled with his history, or if the early disciples had false expectations of the second coming. These things do not mar the total impression ; and if they compel us to abandon our reliance upon the letter, and fall back upon a religion of the spirit, we shall only be yielding to the primitive demand of Christianity, and sinking deeper into its original genius.

It is clear that errors in the Old Testament cannot affect the above position. It too must be accepted in the spirit, and not in the letter ; and no reconstruction of the history of Israel can deprive its finest passages of the solemnity and power of their appeal to the latent religion in ourselves. We come to it now with the Spirit of Christ in our hearts as the criterion by which to judge of its contents ; and the cursing of a psalmist, the vindictiveness of a prophet, the childish notions of a patriarch, only reveal the immaturity of ancient religion, and warn us that we too may not always know what spirit we are of. The imperfections of the history also may be found to have certain advantages when we are able to combine the simplicity of childhood with manhood's truth and wisdom. The beautiful legends of pre-historic times bring us close to the elementary feelings of the heart ; and if through the uncertainty of details we are compelled to take a larger view, we

may learn that there is an ideal truth in history, which is sometimes buried under the laborious and barren accuracy of modern times, and we may come to trace, through successive periods, the slow unfolding of the thought of God in the soul of man.

The inevitable result of the changed view of the Bible is, that for those who accept it, the Scriptures can no longer be the basis of a system of dogma supernaturally authenticated. There may be some sense of loss in the removal of outward props of faith; for there are subjects in which it would be pleasant to our earthly nature to have an assurance resting on a more scientific basis. Those, moreover, to whom Christianity has presented itself mainly as a system of dogma must feel that much of their old belief is vanishing into cloudland, and will clutch at everything that offers an apparent hope of still defending the ancient stronghold. Nevertheless, the gain is greater than the loss. We do not love the Bible less when, from being the despot of the intellect, it has become the minister of the spirit. In ceasing to place it all on one dead level of Divine authority we have ceased at the same time to be disturbed by its riddles and perplexities, we have begun to see its contents in their true proportions and relations, and we feel the pathetic force of its sublimest lessons, unspoiled by their connection with the errors and passions of a bygone civilisation. The latent forces in our own souls are called into exercise. A cut and dried theology no longer oppresses the activity

• of thought. A law of commandments and ordinances no longer supersedes the energy of conscience. Faith becomes a living power, a personal grasp of spiritual reality. We begin to see that an earthen vessel may contain a treasure of gold, and that the Spirit of God is not shut out by the limitations of human intelligence and knowledge. Through similarity of experience and the interpretations of sympathy we understand, as never before, the men who spake in olden time as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Delicate beauties and subtle truths become apparent, which theologians have too often overlooked. The ancient books become tremulous with living light. We find the love of Christ within us; and this love draws our souls to God, and is as a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Many details of thought into which I cannot now enter, follow from the modern view of the Bible; but perhaps sufficient has been said to illustrate the position that Religion may abide while Theology changes, and that the thoughts which interpret the deepest experiences of the soul require revision from time to time, as the intellectual horizon widens and new knowledge is accumulated. The final result of the present upheaval of thought will be, I cannot doubt, a fresh outpouring of the Spirit, not in signs and wonders, but in faith and love, and another onward step towards the realisation of the Kingdom of God upon earth, and the establishment of that

human brotherhood which Christianity has proclaimed, and Christendom denied. Well may we bear the temporary strife and anguish, if at the end we are to see the heralds of peace bringing glad tidings to the world.



II.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

BY CHARLES CLEMENT COE, F.R.G.S.

IN the following Essay I propose to consider the relations which subsist between Physical Science and Natural Religion. I wish to confine myself mainly to this question : What influence for Good or Evil has the idea of an ordered Cosmos had upon a theistic faith ? I shall endeavour first to show the extent to which it has elevated our religious conceptions, and, secondly, I shall deal with certain modern theories which have produced the very opposite effect.

In the first place, the idea of an ordered Cosmos has given us a nobler conception of the Divine Providence. There was a time when it was supposed that Nature was the expression of the Divine Will, but that this Will was wayward in its manifestations—acting according to personal caprice and not according to fixed principles. This view certainly does not present the highest conception of the Divine character ; it interprets the changing phenomena of Nature as expressions

of Divine anger, or retribution, or mere changeableness. But if Nature, as now understood, is the expression of the will of God, such an interpretation can no longer be upheld. God no longer acts like the wayward child or the unconstitutional tyrant—He rules by laws that, once established, are duly observed and never repealed.

Science, by teaching us that the world of Nature is under the rule of Law and that the physical world is an ordered Cosmos, affords the only possible basis for the satisfactory explanation of the problem of evil. We cannot escape this problem by mere change of nomenclature, and by contenting ourselves with calling evil, good. Evil is evil in our sight, and surely none the less in the sight of God. Why then does He permit it? Infinite power is surely capable of carrying out the wishes of infinite love, and yet God does not interfere to prevent, or to remove evil. It is no answer to say that He permits evil, because He is able to turn evil into good. We feel that we ought not to do evil that good may come of it, and we do not believe that God does what it would not be right for us to do, in order to attain some end that may be excellent in itself. Such an interpretation accords neither with the conscience nor the heart of man. It is precisely this sort of conduct which we stigmatise as Jesuitical when observed in man. Nor does such an argument bring any comfort to the sorrowing soul. Tell the bereaved young mother that her child has been allowed to perish by a Heavenly Father, who wishes

by that means to strengthen her character and to purify her soul, and she will refuse to be comforted by such an explanation. She will reply, "Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? Do you ask me, in the bitterness of recent bereavement, to attribute to God a method of spiritual discipline which my soul abhors?" But if you can show that there is another reason for the existence of evil, then the afflicted may rejoice in the fact that spiritual good may be educed out of the worst of physical ills.

In order to explain the existence of evil, we must either suppose that God's power, or God's goodness, is limited. Either He could and would not, or He would but could not, prevent its existence. We believe that He would if He could; that in this respect His power is limited. But we must not picture this limitation as arising from the existence of a rival power equal to His own. The difficulty of believing in two Infinite Spirits engaged in an eternal strife is so great, that even the doctrine of Dualism has itself been softened into the belief in the ultimate predominance of the Good Spirit. Canon Rawlinson, in his *Great Monarchies of the Ancient World*, tells us that the Dualism of the Persian religion was modified, until at last it was resolved into the doctrine of final restoration, and the triumph of the good over the evil. "The extreme length of future punishment was till the

“resurrection, and three awful days afterwards, “during which sinners (including Ahrimanes and all “evil spirits) should suffer purifying torments, while “good men should weep in pity for them. Then “the whole creation should be happy in Gorôtman.”

The doctrine of a Satan, as expounded by Christian theologians, cannot be accepted as a satisfactory solution. The story, which the genius of Milton has converted into a splendid epic, tells how the great angel fell from heaven to hell, and there chose evil for his good; how his settled hatred of God led him to escape from hell—to enter Paradise—to tempt man, and thus to bring sin and death into the new creation. But inasmuch as he did this with the connivance and permission of God, it does not take away the responsibility from the Divine Being. Satan, allowed to escape from his prison-house, becomes in a sense the agent of the Divine Providence, however unconscious he may have been of the part which he was playing.

Nor can we believe, with some ancient Gnostic sects, that the power of God for good is limited by the intractable material which baffles the skill of the great Architect of the universe. When we consider the order of the celestial mechanism, the definite proportions in which the chemical elements unite, the mathematical form of the crystal, the beautiful grace of the simplest organism, and the marvellous construction of the most complicated body, it seems to me utterly impossible for us to believe that matter

- has proved itself strong enough to resist the omnipotent energy of the creative Spirit.

But if the power of God has been limited neither by opposing spirit nor by recalcitrant matter, where shall we find the source of this supposed limitation? Those who believe in God's infinite perfections cannot accept the doctrine that He is, after all, a finite Being, so far as His power is concerned. Hence, no other explanation remains than that He has Himself placed a limitation on the exercise of His own power. But here again we must guard against the impression that He has allowed Himself to be thwarted in His original scheme of creation, His original purpose being frustrated by the fall of man. No! God's power is limited, because He chose from the first certain methods of providential government, and never deviated from the methods so adopted. He chose to govern by fixed laws rather than by arbitrary will; He chose to let man pass from the blindness of comparative ignorance to the vision of comparative wisdom, instead of endowing him from the first with an infallible inspiration; He chose to leave man a free agent, instead of making him a moral automaton; He chose the method of slow development and hereditary transmission of faculties, rather than that of immediate creation. It may be contended that these chosen methods of the Divine providence stand condemned, by reason of the evils which they admit—that catastrophes need not occur if special provi-

dences prevented the action of general laws when they threatened men's life—that sin might never have corrupted the soul of man if he had not been left free to choose—that in the absence of the principle of heredity, there would be no transmission of evil tendencies from generation to generation. If such be the argument, our reply is simply this, that the alternative method, which God has not adopted, would prove less productive of good and more fraught with evil, *on the whole*. If you reject that government by fixed law, which makes the uniformity of nature equivalent to the fidelity of God, you can only substitute for it government by arbitrary will and by transient impulse, which, carried out on all sides and every occasion, would soon turn the ordered cosmos into a confused chaos.

But it might be said that there might be a government by fixed law, qualified by a special providence preventing catastrophe and trouble, and always interposing to save men from pain and sorrow, and that this would be the best way for the Divine omnipotence to co-operate with the Divine pity and benevolence. But in this attempt to save man from sorrow, you would impair the value of the moral discipline to which he is now subjected. As Dr. Martineau finely says,* “Without a reliable “Universe, and a trustworthy God, no moral character could grow: A fickle world only admits of a

* “*Hours of Thought*,” vol I, p. 77, 2nd edition.

“lawless race; no obedience could be required of those who are placed among shifting conditions, to whom foresight is denied, and whose wisdom is as likely to go astray as their folly. As well might you attempt to build upon the restless sea, or steer by shooting stars, or keep time by the leaves dancing in the wind, as shape a mind or train a character amid a scene whose courses were unsteady, and where action was a lottery.” In the same way, if God had not allowed us to teach ourselves; to grow from ignorance to knowledge, and through self-discipline to attain to a dutiful self-restraint, we might have been controlled by an infallible and all-directing instinct, we might have been spiritual automata, but not the moral creatures which we now know ourselves to be. Annul the law of heredity by which like produces like, and you would render impossible the development of Nature, as Science has recently revealed it. Substitute a new law, by which like produced that which was utterly unlike, and you would start back appalled from the awful phenomenon. The evils which we deplore are thus seen to be the necessary accompaniments of the best methods of Divine providence, which it is possible for us to conceive.

The only difficulty in connection with evil is that it is permitted to exist. Let its existence be explained in such a way as is not derogatory to the Divine character, and then all the arguments which

are used to sustain our faith, and to awaken our hope, may be used without any misgiving. We can picture God as pitying us, aye, as suffering with us even, while He does nothing to remove the evil which oppresses us. We can rejoice in the thought that God is ever bringing good out of that evil, which is the inevitable shadow which follows His government by law. The spiritual discipline of life is indefinitely enhanced by the fact, that to human intelligence and free will is committed the task of preventing the advent, and of eliminating the curse, of physical and moral evil. The scientific idea of a world of nature governed by law thus forms the basis of the explanation of the problem of evil, while Science palpably assists man to triumph over the ills which affect humanity.

Science aids man in his work, arms him against all perils, and thus helps on favourably that victory of light over darkness, of knowledge over ignorance, of health over disease, of life over death, of mind over body, which it is ever the aspiration of practical religion to achieve.

But if Science has aided Religion by enabling us to attain to a correct knowledge of the method of the Divine providence, it has done no less to impress upon us the dignity of human nature and the value of the discipline to which man is now subjected in this wondrous school of life.

It concerns Religion that we should be able to hold fast to the doctrine of the inherent worth of

human nature. What avails it if we profess to believe that we are made in the spiritual image of God, that we are the sons and daughters of the Almighty, that we are fellow-workers with God, that we are heirs of immortal life, if, in the practical life, humanity is found to be utterly incapable of discerning the truths of God—utterly incapable of living a divine life? I contend that Science has made it easier for us to realise our faith in the worth of human nature. I am well aware that there is a difficulty in this connection. Science, it may be said, has revealed to us the all-but infinite immensity of the universe, and man occupies too insignificant a position to justify the claims of religious faith.

Religious faith meets this objection by contending that the body may be dwarfed by comparison with the immensities of Nature, but that the immortal soul of man cannot be.

“Man,” says Pascal,* “is but a feeble reed
“trembling in the midst of creation, but then he is
“endowed with thought. It does not need a
“universe to arm for his destruction—a breath of
“wind, a drop of water, will suffice to kill him.
“But though the universe were to fall on man and
“kill him, he would be greater in his death than the
“universe in its victory, for he would be conscious
“of his defeat and it would not be conscious of its

* *Pensées* XVIII., ii. *apud* Sermons by the Rev. John Ker.

"victory." "There is but one object greater than
 "the soul," says Augustine, "and that one its
 "Creator," and we may reason very fitly, that if it
 "was worthy of God to create such a being at first
 "it is worthy of Him to care for it afterwards, and
 "to seek its progress and happiness with all the
 "means at His disposal, that is, with a power and
 "goodness and wisdom which are unlimited."*

Science confirms this estimate of faith. The microscope has come to correct any scepticism which may have been suggested to our minds by the immensities of space which are revealed to us by the telescope.

"Every leaf, a populous world, maintains
 Invisible nations on its wide extended plains.
 So great is littleness, the mind at fault
 Between the peopled leaf and starry vault
 Doubts which is grandest, and with holy awe
 Adores the God who made them, and whose law
 Sustains them in eternity or time,
 Greatest or least, ineffably sublime." †

And if there was a Divine wisdom in the argument which contended that the providence which watched the sparrows, fed the ravens, and adorned the lilies would still more care for man, how much is this argument intensified in the hearts of those who see beneath the microscope the proofs of Divine skill, the objects of Divine care?

The perfect confidence in which faith reposes is further justified when we consider the circumstances

* Sermons by Rev. John Ker, p. 234.

† Charles Mackay, *Voices from the Crowd*, p. 60.

Under which man has been made acquainted with this greater universe. The human race stand towards this enlarged sphere in the not altogether insignificant relation of *discoverer*; whatever may have once been thought, there is now no just reason for supposing that God has Himself communicated special and infallible revelation of the true significance of the visible world. On the other hand, the human race has been left to make investigation for itself, and in these latter days with a success which is indeed marvellous. Speaking of that special branch of Science which has done so much to increase our knowledge of the dimensions of the universe, an eloquent writer truly says: "How wonderful is the power of man, chained down to the surface of the earth, an intelligent atom on a grain of sand lost in the immensity of space, he invents instruments which multiply a thousand fold his vision; he sounds the depths of the ether, gauges the visible creation, and counts the myriads of stars which people it; next studying their most complicated movements, he measures exactly their dimensions and the distance of the nearest of them from the earth, and next deduces their masses. Then discovering in the seeming disorder of the stellar groupings real bonds of union, he at last evolves order out of apparent confusion."*

Science again bears witness to the worth of this

* Amédée Guillemin's *The Heavens*, edited by T. Norman Lockyer.

external world considered as a sphere of spiritual discipline and instruction. Religion once taught that man was created a perfect being, and that he fell from that of perfection, in consequence of which his nature was degraded and the external world was cursed for his sake. ✕

That ancient story is true enough as an allegory of our personal experience. There is a paradise of comparative innocence in the childhood of human life; there is a definite fall into pronounced sin and disobedience. Sin does cloud this present world with sorrow, and makes human effort more difficult, and prepares disabilities for generations yet to come; there is in our present experience an internecine strife between good and evil. But when we regard this story as sober history, it is at once refuted by modern science, which tells of The Descent of Man instead of his Fall, and speaks of that Physical Descent in terms which convert it into a Spiritual Ascent.

From the doctrine that the external world was cursed as soon as made, that thorns and thistles, and, worse still, the physical death of the animal creation, were the results of human transgression—the palpable proofs of the Divine curse—Science, and observedly the science of geology, has freed us at once and for evermore.

The earth is not the prison house of a race condemned to be circumscribed during the first stage of its immortal career by the fearful curse of God; but it is the beautiful and appropriate scene

•of human endeavour and trial, of human aspiration and success, on which we are fully persuaded that the tenderest blessing of God's parental love is ever resting. During the long eras of the past—through ages whose duration the finite mind in vain endeavours to realise—the earth has been prepared for the habitation of man, and we come upon the scene as the heirs of those past times, to use their stored up forces and materials. Our race is the youngest born and favourite of time, to which outward circumstances offer not a curse that cannot be shaken off, but a blessing richer and fuller than has heretofore been enjoyed. To us this earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof—it moves by the Divine force, it is visited by the Divine light, it glows with the Divine love.

Science again has revealed to us a philosophy of thorns which utterly ignores the theological interpretation. They are not proofs of human sin but the accompaniments of natural evolution, or, as I should prefer to put it, illustrations of a Divine purpose. What that philosophy of thorns is, there is no need that I should now explain. My readers know what great advantages have occurred from the cross fertilisation of plants; what important part the insect plays in this matter. There is no need that I should remind them of the fact that certain insects can do this service most efficiently for certain plants; and how these plants are so constructed as to attract and accommodate the

insect that will perform this friendly service, and to repel the insect that feeds on its nectar but does not carry its pollen to another flower. The God of Nature has contrived every conceivable method to keep off those whose intrusion would not be useful to the flower. Among these agencies the thorn occupies a conspicuous place, and among such protected flowers the thistle is a typical plant.

Science has rolled back the cloud of God's⁹ curse from the sphere of human life, it has not less removed an altogether artificial horror that once haunted the chamber of death. Apart from all theological interpretation, that event has in itself sufficient mystery and sadness. We need not make it sadder and more mysterious than it is; yet we are taught by some that the little infant, the innocent child, the capable workman for God and for man, the aged one who after a vigorous life is spending the sabbath of old age in peace—die because of the sin of Adam;—nay, that not men alone, but all animals die from a similar cause. I have stood by frequently and heard that doctrine expounded to bereaved parents over the body of an innocent baby. There are inferences that the bereaved might draw from such a statement which would not tend to increase one's faith in the justice and the mercy of God. But from such a trial of our faith the Science of Geology has relieved us. Death—physical death—existed on the earth millions of years before man made his appearance. It was upon the tomb of

Unnumbered generations that the drama of human life, with its joys and its sorrows, its endeavours and failures, was finally enacted.

Few educated readers now doubt the fact that the phenomenon of death did exist before man, or hesitate to draw the inference that therefore physical death could not have been caused by human sin. No one, I suppose, is ready to accept the explanation offered by one profound thinker who supposes that before the world was created on a particular day of a given month in the year 4004 B.C., the rocks and the fossils which are embedded therein, were created just as they now appear—an assertion which seems to me to verge on the blasphemous, and to degrade God to the level of the manufacturer of sham relics. Nor can I think that there are many who will be so ready to invert the usual order of things as to agree with the dictum of Dr. Bushnell, that human sin did cause the phenomenon of physical death—that the coming event cast its shadow before, or, to quote his most astounding proposition, that physical death was the *anticipative result* of human sin. When an opinion is so tottering that it requires to be propped by arguments like these, it is a sign of a speedy decline, and of an irrevocable fall. Now this boon of Science to Religion is apt to be ignored; but it has enabled us to preach a brighter gospel to the bereaved, than would be possible on the basis of the older teaching.

Natural science opens out a new sphere of con-

templation in the life beyond the grave. Speaking of future culture here on earth, Dr. Ray Lankester says* :—"Through faith in science he (man) will "gain a zest and interest in life such as the present "plan of culture fails to supply." I accept the dictum believing it true of the life to come as well as of the life that now is. He who is the student of nature here on earth, and finds in its revelations the presence of the divine, may be assured of carrying with him beautiful and glorious memories of his present existence. For

"I think not

Our old delights will fail us, no—I feel
Upon this giddy margin of two worlds
That there is nothing beautiful in this
The passionate soul has clasped, but shall partake
Its everlasting essence, not a scent
Of rain-drenched flower, no fleece of evening cloud
Which blended with a thought that rose to Heaven
Shall ever die, but linked with joy, that drew
Colour and shape from this fair world, shall shed
Familiar sweetness through the glorious frame
After a thousand ages "†

And surely those who have been trained to observe and to understand, to admire and to worship here, will find a new delight in investigating the glories of that exalted sphere which cannot be of less interest than the one which has been left behind.

There is one lesson which modern science might have taught, though, perhaps, we can scarcely claim that it has been duly pondered in some quarters.

* *Report of British Association*, Southport, 1884, p. 527.

† Talfourd, *The Castilian*, Act v. sc. iv.

The doctrine of Evolution, as it seems to me, has offered a consistent explanation of the phenomena connected with Divine inspiration and Divine revelation. If we believe that man has been left to find out truth for himself, then it is perfectly intelligible that the conscience of one man, or of one nation, should teach one thing, and the conscience of another man, or another nation, another thing. Then we can understand that the same man may, like Paul, "verily think that he ought to do" what he subsequently regrets. If we believe that men have been left to themselves to find out truth, the records of past inspiration, which come to us as the revealed word of God written in the sacred Scriptures, should be the history of the human development of moral and spiritual beings. At once all difficulties vanish in the light of this hypothesis. Then we can understand why even in the Bible itself there should be two distinct accounts of the creation, which it is impossible to harmonise. Then we feel no difficulty in the fact that, in trying to explain the phenomenon that marine remains were to be found on the tops of existing mountains, the earliest theorists should select the explanation which seemed to them to be the easiest, and should say that the water had covered the "everlasting" hills, rather than that the mountains had been thrust up from the deep. Then, without claiming miraculous inspiration for the author, we can appreciate the poetic insight of the first chapter of Genesis, which forecasts the

Theistic philosophy of the present day, when it made the will of God, as expressed in the Divine command, the ultimate source of creation, when it pointed out the final cause of the natural world, the sun being made in order that it might give light, and when it expressed the Divine method of creation by the figure of the Spirit of God brooding over the dark waters of chaos. In the same way, with regard to the moral and spiritual experiences of the Bible, if we only understood that they arose naturally in the course of human growth and development, or as the result of human degeneration, we should be filled with interest, moved now to admiration and, anon, to pity. These things would then be felt to be recorded for our example, or for our warning, and the hopeless task of trying to interpret human error as Divine truth would no more be demanded at our hands. Such is the result which must come soon, although "the scientific—that is, the accurate—study of history is comparatively new."*

In this way, those who retain a belief in God find that Science helps to enlarge their ideas of God's providence, and of human destiny. But it is also a fact that modern science has done something to shake our faith in the character, and even in the existence of God. In an article in *The Contemporary Review* (Jan., 1888,) entitled "The Lord was not in

* Dr. Hatch's *Hubbert Lectures*, p. 15.

"the Earthquake," Miss Frances Power Cobbe asserts that the doctrine of Organic Evolution has removed God further from us than He was before; that the theory of Natural Selection has imparted an added gloom to the darker side of Nature, and that, therefore, we must not look to Nature as containing a fitting revelation of God, and suggesting a moral example to man, but must listen to the still small voice of the individual conscience.

In the first place, Miss Cobbe asserts that "God" has seemed to recede further away behind Nature "since the dawn of the new philosophy. The new theory leaves us indeed still a Deity behind Nature, but it must be owned that he is very far behind Nature indeed" (p. 75). In reply to this objection, we may say that God is just as immanent, just as indwelling in Nature according to the religious conception of Evolution, as He is according to the conception of a special creation. If God called certain species into existence at a definite time, and gave each primitive pair and their descendants the power of reproducing their likeness to all time, this gives us one moment of interposition, and makes it possible that there should have been an absentee God, just as much as the doctrine of Evolution does. If the contention be that God's interposition took place not six thousand years ago but incalculable aeons—that discovery cannot make much difference, for if God had left the world to itself six thousand years ago, and was still absent from it, it would not

make any difference to our sense of spiritual need, whether He had been absent six thousand, or six million of million years.

Again we read : " Each phenomenon also seems " to be brought about in a manner which removes " the authorship further away. We had fondly " thought we almost saw the Divine hand painting " the rose, moulding the graceful bird, planting the " islands in the sea, building the mountain towers, " lifting up the arch of heaven, and bidding the " stars roll in their appointed courses. Now we " see a hundred intervening causes for each and " everything ' (p. 75). But surely all such language as this was always understood to be figurative ; beautiful in the poetry of faith, but never, at the peril of true religion, to be taken literally. God, who is a spirit, does not exhibit for our worship any hand-painted flower, or any hand-planted island. They were all supposed to be made originally by the command of God. " And God said " and it was so." And, once created, the blooming plant, in order to reproduce its like, went through a series of transformations very similar to the processes of evolution, whereby the flower became a seed, the seed a plant, and the plant once more, and quite gradually, put forth flowers of a second generation similar to the parent form. We have simply one method of the agency of a spiritual God put in the place of another ; and so long as we have reason to believe that this is the truer view of the Divine action we ought to accept it.

•We may quote Miss Cobbe herself to answer her own objection. "It is a singular fact," she says, "that whenever we find out how anything is done our first conclusion seems to be that God did not do it. No matter how wonderful, how beautiful, how infinitely complex and delicate has been the machinery which has worked, perhaps for centuries, perhaps for millions of ages, to bring about some beneficent result, if we can but catch a glimpse of the wheels its divine character disappears. The machinery did it all. It would be altogether superfluous to look further. . . The explanation of each phenomenon is still first angrily disputed and then mournfully accepted by the majority of pious people, just as if finding out the ways of God were not necessarily bringing ourselves nearer to the knowledge of Him, and the highest bound of the human intellect were not to be able to say, like Kepler, 'O God, I think "Thy thoughts after Thee!"' *

Miss Cobbe contends that Natural Selection has added gloom to the darker side of Nature, that physical destruction and physical pain were once regarded as the exceptions to a rule of Divine beneficence, but that now they are exalted into laws or conditions of the Divine providence. It is obvious that the destruction which goes on in Nature is the same that it ever was; but Natural Selection, if it

**Darwinism in Morals*, p. 1-2

be a true theory, has this advantage, that it shows that this enormous destruction is the result of an enormous output of life, and that the destruction has been utilized so as to secure the preservation of a race, or the improvement of a species. And Miss Cobbe admits that the general result is so good that it compels our admiration for "the general beneficence of the power behind Nature."

The only fault then that Miss Cobbe has to find with the Providence of God, according to the conception of Natural Selection, is that this general beneficence is purchased at too great a cost to the individual. She complains that Nature can only show us this beneficence *en masse*, carried out with apparent pitilessness towards myriads of individuals.

The individual, it is said, is sacrificed to the interests of the herd. It would perhaps more accurately represent the theory of Natural Selection to say that the individual is often sacrificed for the benefit of the race. But it is hardly true to say that the interests of the individual are sacrificed to the interests of the herd. It is true that the logic of Natural Selection requires that there should be no co-operation between individuals, but that each one should bear the full brunt of the "struggle for existence." But Darwin warns us that we must use the term, "struggle for existence," in a large and metaphorical sense, including dependence of one being on another.*

* *Origin of Species* p. 50.

• In his *Descent of Man*, Darwin pointed out how in numberless animal societies the struggle between separate individuals for the means of existence disappears; how struggle is replaced by co-operation, and how that substitution results in the development of intellectual and moral faculties which secure to the species the best conditions for survival. The struggle henceforth was between species and species, and he held that "those communities which included "the greatest number of the most sympathetic members would flourish best, and rear the greatest "number of offspring" (p. 163, 2nd edition).

"I recollect," says Prince Kropotkin, "the impression produced upon me by the animal world of "Siberia when I explored the Vitim Regions in the "company of so accomplished a zoologist as my "friend Polyakoff was. We both were under the "fresh impression of the *Origin of Species*, but we "vainly looked for the keen competition between "animals of the same species which the reading of "Darwin's work had prepared us to expect, even "after taking into account the remarks of the third "chapter." *

Miss Cobbe complains that according to the theory of Natural Selection, which she regards as a law of Nature, "might is the measure of right, and "the weak are systematically left at the mercy of the "strong." But the weak sometimes pit their craft

* *Nineteenth Century*, vol. xxviii., p. 341.

against mere brute force, and the mutual consideration involved in the idea of co-operation and sympathy with one another, certainly introduces a law, which is not that of the wholesale destruction of the weak by the strong.

The "Survival of the Fittest" is not carried out in Nature in that literal manner which the theory of Natural Selection implies, and on which which Miss Cobbe founds her objections. Mutual sympathy and co-operation save the weaker vessels in the animal world quite as much as they do in human societies. I venture to think that the animal world, taken as a whole, and as actually observed by those who have no foregone conclusion on the matter, would present us with phenomena which are quite worthy of the providence of a good and gracious God, and that there are no more difficulties in Nature herself, apart from human theories, than there ever were.

We are told that we must not learn morality from the world of Nature, and yet I cannot help thinking that the story of evolution from the simplest kind of living matter to the highest intellect, the most enlightened morality, and the profoundest piety of man, is a lesson of struggle and improvement, than which it would be difficult to find anything more striking or more suggestive. We must take Nature and the Natural world *en bloc*, says Miss Cobbe, but if we took the world of man *en bloc* we should find as much evil, as much selfishness as, and sometimes far more

than, we do in the animal world. Surely it is not our business to hold up the cruelty of individual animals as a sample of all the rest, or to single out the practice of polygamy among animals, as if there were no monogamists among them—but rather to admire the way in which from the simplest beginnings, evolution has gone on preparing the way for man and for all we esteem distinctively human. Such a vision should assuredly convey a lesson—I had almost said, set an example—which we ought to follow.

Before leaving this subject I must remark that Miss Cobbe scarcely seems to occupy a consistent position in her denunciation of the God of Nature. She declares that in the face of Evolutionism we must choose between God or Baal —God the indwelling spirit, The Holy Ghost, the still small voice which speaks to the soul of man; and the Baal of Nature, who speaks in the wind and the earthquake and the fire, the Nature God, whose character has something altogether lacking from the ideal which we have worshipped in the Father of Spirits (p. 77.)

Now this must mean either that there are two Gods in the world, or that there are two human aspects of the One True God, both of which aspects cannot be true. It is clear, however, that Miss Cobbe does not hold the doctrine of Dualism. On the other hand, she contends that when we have turned to the still small voice which will teach us that lesson of mercy which the world of Nature does not indicate, “we may still gaze upon this

“beautiful world with the sweet sense that our jôy
“in its loveliness is in truth the deep sympathy of
“Sons in their Father’s work, the echo of God’s
“divine delight in Beauty, manifested in earth and
“sky.” (p. 83.) But one can scarcely understand
how Miss Cobbe can do this if the God of Nature
be a cruel, merciless Baal. She must choose
between the two human conceptions of the one God,
but she must not attempt to harmonise them, or
what becomes of her exhortation to choose between
God and Baal ?

There is another way in which the position now
assumed by Miss Cobbe seems inconsistent. She
believes that in a future life we shall look with eagle
eyes on everything that has been made, and find it
good.

“ In the life hereafter it is to be hoped that such a
“view may be afforded to our spirits, of the great
“scheme of things, as that all darkness may vanish,
“and the God of Nature be not only, as now, believed
“to be the same as the Father of Spirits, but seem
“to be so.” (p. 73.)

“ There will come a time, as I believe, in the
“aeons of our immortality, when we shall be able
“with eagle eyes to embrace the Divine plan of our
“world’s history, and once more look on everything
“which has been made, and find it good.” (p. 82.)

But if Miss Cobbe anticipates such a revelation as
this hereafter, ought she not to teach us to walk by
faith till that period of enlightenment come ? How

•can we reject the God of Nature because he seems to us to wear the mask of Baal, when we know that the face of the Heavenly Father is now behind that mask, if only we had the penetration to discern it?

Hitherto I have spoken of the difficulties which the Theist feels in reconciling the highest conception of the Divine character with the idea that this God is responsible for the phenomena of Nature as expounded by Science. We have now to consider a more vital objection. It is the assertion that evolution is brought about, mainly or altogether, by natural selection, and that natural selection is based ultimately upon chance; and that what takes place through chance excludes the idea of design on the part of an intelligent Creator.

Now, first of all, it should be observed that scientific men, expounders of the Darwinian philosophy, themselves assert that natural selection is dependent upon the principle of chance. "Through-
out this chapter," says Darwin, "I have spoken of
"Selection as the paramount power, yet its action
"ABSOLUTELY depends on what we, in our ignorance,
"call *spontaneous or accidental variability*" (*Var.* II. p. 248). "The theory of Natural Selection," says Mr. Romanes, "trusts to the chapter of accidents in the
"matter of variation" (*Journal of the Linnean Society, Zoology*, vol. xix., p. 343). "The theory requires," says Mr. Mivart, . . . "fortuitous variations" (*Genesis of Species*, p. 60). "The origin of mimetic
"colouration," says Mr. Cope, "likemanyotherthings,

"is yet unknown. An orthodox Darwinian attributes it to Natural Selection, which turns out on analysis to be hazard. The survival of useful colouration is no doubt the result of Natural Selection"* (410). "On the Darwinian hypothesis," says Mr. Graham, "man is the child of chance: as from the Evolution hypothesis, in its full generality, all life is the result of chance" (*The Creed of Science*, pp. 25-7).

It is most important that we should ascertain exactly what is meant by the assertion that evolution by Natural Selection is dependent upon chance, because there are various meanings assigned to that term.

In the first place, it may be regarded as the antithesis of law, as something which happens apart from any necessary cause. The word is used in this sense and by scientific men, but it is used only to deny that there is any such a thing in reality. And hence Mr. Huxley is naturally irate, that persons should attribute to Darwin the doctrine that variations arise from chance, that is, do not arise from a definite cause.

In the second place, chance is defined to mean that which happens according to a fixed law, but by a law of which we are ignorant. It is obvious that this only defines the relation of our minds to a given phenomenon, it does not determine its essential

* E. D. Cope, *The Origin of the Fittest*.

nature. Moreover, this attitude of ignorance is only temporary on our part. It would be a most unscientific attitude of mind to rest in such ignorance.

With respect to the third definition which recognises the fact that natural phenomena are the results of physical law, but which contends that some of them are accidental in the sense that they are not designed, I may remark, that if so-called fortuitous events happen according to law, that fact is enough for physical science. Religious philosophy must discuss the question whether there be a God behind Nature, and whether He has foreseen or designed all that occurred. The definition simply dogmatises as to God's relation to the physical universe.

Now if every event has its sufficient cause, if the reign of law in nature exists independently of human ignorance and if Science, as Science, affirms the presence of physical law while calling in question the possibility of the idea of any design or purpose behind, it might be supposed that there was no room for the action of chance at all. But the true definition of chance is associated with the idea of coincidence. Each separate event must have its sufficient cause, if we only knew it; but these separate events may coincide, and through their coincidence produce marked effects, and it is in this coincidence, if anywhere, that the element of chance may be found. And it is in this sense that Evolution by Natural Selection is based upon chance.

The variations from which Natural Selection

chooses are those modifications which are necessarily associated with reproduction. There is always an amount of uncertainty as to these variations. It is impossible to tell whether the offspring will resemble father, or mother, or grand-parents, or how far it may reproduce the characteristics of a remote ancestry. It is, therefore, only by a happy coincidence when a variation favourable to the race turns up. This is the logical consequence of the principle on which the theory is based.

We shall be able to understand the meaning of this assertion more clearly if we consider for a moment what takes place in connection with a game of chance. There are three ways in which it is possible to play such a game. Those who open a gambling table lay down certain laws of the game which are so far favourable to the bank that it is sure to win more than any private player, or more than all the private players put together, for it is one of the laws of the game that it only loses a certain sum of money in one night; and if now and then, on a particular evening, in that sense, the bank is broken, it only involves a definite loss, which is soon more than recouped by the rush of gamblers who hasten to get the better of the bank while, as they suppose, the luck is going against it. On the other hand, the late R. A. Proctor has shown, over and over again, how impossible it is for the gambler, who relies on pure chance, to invent any method which will secure infallible and unfailling success. There is only one

way in which such a man can win always, and that is by cheating.

Let us apply these principles to the evolution of organic Nature as supposed to take place by Natural Selection. If God evolves a universe on the principle of a game of chance, it is conceivable that He might act contrary to the laws of the game when it suited His purpose to do so. That would, in effect, be equivalent to a very special providence and necessitate miraculous interposition. But I venture to think that no scientific man, nor any enlightened Theist, would expect that God should do this. In the next place, the favourable coincidences which occur in Nature might take place on the same principle that coincidences take place which are favourable to the bank. In that case the evolution by Natural Selection would not be a game of "pure" chance, but of chance so modified that the Divine player must win. But in proportion to the adoption of this principle, the element of chance is modified and the influence of Natural Selection is decreased. Now, according to Mr. A. R. Wallace, this is precisely what has taken place. We have seen that the indefinite character of those variations, which are always and necessarily associated with reproduction, and from which alone it is supposed that the struggle for existence selects favourable variations, is the source of the element of chance. But Mr. Wallace contends that these birth variations are not thus indefinite, that they occur in a more or less regular

and calculable manner. This seems to be very much the position of the bank as against the players; but it implies that a method of winning by the action of apparent chance has been previously thought out.

If, however, Mr. Wallace's view of the nature of birth variations be not correct, and Darwin's is, then when the favourable variation turns up, it does so by a pure chance. The analogy of games of chance seems to show that in that case favourable variations would not turn up often enough to enable a given species to win the game in the struggle for existence. It follows, then, from these considerations, that the coincidences by which Evolution is supposed to be brought about by Natural Selection are not the result of mere chance, but of chance which has been modified so as to give the advantage to the player; in other words, the process goes on in accordance with a method which has been preconceived.

We must not forget that Darwin not only taught the doctrine of Evolution by Natural Selection, but also admitted that there might be Evolution apart from Natural Selection. This doctrine consists in the assertion of the power of the organism to adapt itself to changed conditions apart from the action of Natural Selection. It is sometimes said that the organism is adapted *by* the circumstances *for* the circumstances: that the world is a machine which works automatically, and which requires no further explanation. But this power, which the organism

has, of adapting itself to new conditions, whenever they may happen to arise, does not exclude the idea of Design. Dr. Andrew Murray, in his *Geographical Distribution of Mammals*, says :—

“Dr. Babbage, as all the world knows, has invented a calculating and an analytical machine. The first is merely a machine for arithmetical calculation, the latter is a contrivance of a much higher and more difficult character. It not only does the arithmetical calculations, but changes the formulæ where it is necessary to do so in order to work out the result, and goes through the operation of equation. . . . I asked him the question, whether he could so set the machine that it should go on producing a series of numbers until a certain concurrence of circumstances should take place, the time when such concurrence would or could take place not being known to him, and that then, and not until then, the alteration on the law should take place. The doctor thought for a moment, and then replied—‘Certainly, I can! I can give the machine an order to go on producing a series of numbers until the last, and the third last, and the fifth last, or any other combination shall all be the same figure, or shall be some combination of figures—all threes, for example, or all fives, or two fours, and one five, and then the new law shall come into operation. I cannot tell when that may happen, and do not know whether it may ever happen, but whenever it does happen,

“ ‘be it soon or be it late, the new law will immediately come into operation.’ ”*

To sum up what has been said. Science has expounded to us the all prevailing order of the physical world. This revelation has aided our Theistic faith by enabling us to realise the regular administration of God's providential rule. The regular administration by physical law has explained the existence of evil as the inevitable accompaniment of that method of administration, and so afforded the most satisfactory answer to the question why God permits evil. Physical Science has done much to impress us with the greatness of our human nature, with the importance of our life here as a discipline of the spirit. It has removed from physical death the horrible idea that it was introduced into the world by human sin, and it has opened new spheres of interest to the immortal soul. On the other hand, the modern scientific theories, which may, or may not, be true revelations of the Divine method, when properly understood, do not make it more difficult for us to believe in a Beneficent God, nor do they justify us in the belief that Nature is silent as to the existence of God. There ought to be no feeling of hostility between those who seek for truth, whatever their sphere may be, and if human weakness cannot always secure this, we are at least sure that there can be no real

* *Geographical Distribution of Mammals.* Andrew Murray, p. 12.

discrepancy between the actual phases of Divine Truth, and with that conviction we may well pray that more light concerning the physical methods of God may be vouchsafed, and that spiritual faith may grow the clearer and the brighter in consequence.

“ Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell,
That mind and soul according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster ”



III.

RELIGION AND ETHICS.

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ON no question, probably, has there been in the past a greater divergence of opinion than on this question of the relation between Religion and Ethics; and though, in the present day, most thoughtful persons are agreed as to some important points in this relation, still the question, as a whole, has found as yet no generally accepted solution. Much, however, of the difficulty, which seems to invest the subject, arises from merely linguistic causes, and may be cleared away by careful reflection on the different senses in which these two words, "Ethics" and "Religion," have been, and still are, used. To take first the word, "Ethics" or "Morality": a man may be called "moral" who outwardly conforms to all the laws of conduct which society has stamped with its approval, even though his only motive for obeying these laws may be desire for his own personal pleasure and worldly success,

or dread of the physical, legal, or social penalties which the violation of them would entail. Such prudential conduct as this may involve nothing more than such development of the intellect and the imagination as enables a man to vividly realise remote consequences, and so to bring the idea of future pleasure and advantage to bear upon present conduct. Of course, morality of this sort—which, indeed, I should decline to name morality at all—has no possible relation to Religion, for, whatever else Religion may be, it certainly embraces, as a part of its essence, the awakening of ideas and affections which take the mind out of, and beyond, the sphere of its own individual interests and gratifications.

But while it is easy to determine the relation, or rather non-relation, of this spurious prudential morality to Religion, there is another kind of morality, the relation of which to Religion is a much more complex matter. Genuine morality, I take it, always involves the recognition of, and acquiescence in, a law of conduct which has not its ground in the individual's own personal tastes and personal inferences, but is felt to carry with it universal and intrinsic authority, so that it cannot be disobeyed without the consciousness that we have done what we *ought* not to have done, and so have violated, not merely our own individual nature, but that higher super-personal nature which is peculiar to no man, but is common to all. The insight into

the demands of this higher nature develops with experience and reflection from the very limited claim of the conscience on the savage up to the highly-evolved perception of duty in the man of high culture ; but in both alike the moral law reveals itself as that which has not its source in the individual, *quâ* individual, but rather as a universal principle which asserts itself in individuals, and imposes upon them the obligation to obey it. If, now, we ask ourselves what is the relation of this genuine morality to Religion, we see at once that, at all events, the relation is a very intimate one; but to understand what it precisely is, it will be better first to turn to that other word, "Religion," and inquire in what different senses it is used.

In endeavouring to understand what is the fundamental idea involved in the word "Religion," it is necessary to be on our guard against attaching too much importance to those statements concerning the religious sentiments and usages of uncivilised races on which Mr. Spencer, and some other anthropologists, lay so much stress; for the formative religious ideas, which are silently working all through the period of savagery, and which ultimately come to the front, are the very ideas which in the earliest stages of human society are the least noticeable; and, therefore, casual observers of savage life are very apt to entirely overlook them. It matters little for our present purpose whether the first form which religious ideas assumed was the worship of

ancestral ghosts or, on the other hand, of the personifications of natural objects and natural forces. No doubt the more prominent emotions which arose in the savage mind at the thought of powerful spirits who could influence the destiny of mortals, were the emotions of fear and hope, rather than the sentiment of moral reverence, and naturally it would only be by slow degrees, in proportion as the moral consciousness of the worshipper unfolded itself, that the conception of the Deity would assume a pre-eminently ethical character. The idea of God cannot possibly rise above the worshipper's moral ideal. But what is of especial interest in our present discussion, is the fact that, while theological conceptions cannot transcend the ethical ideal, they may, and often do, remain far below it, and hence arise those frequent attempts, on the part of established religions, to claim a higher right to regulate the thought and actions of believers than is possessed by the reason and conscience itself.

Nor is it difficult to see how this sacerdotal tendency to override the natural authority of the ethical consciousness almost inevitably arises in the earlier stages of intellectual development, for, while theological ideas and religious institutions are, at the best, the outcome of the highest moral and spiritual experience of the minds in which they originate, they no sooner become stereotyped in an established priestly order, an established book, or an established church, than all

further ethical and spiritual growth is discouraged; the priest, the church, and the book acquire a certain factitious sanctity and authority, which causes them to carry far greater weight with devout, but unreflective, minds than do the immediate pronouncements of the moral law itself. Notorious instances of this are to be found close at home in the doctrines of priestly absolution, of Biblical infallibility, of vicarious atonement, of everlasting punishment, etc. The true test of divine authority and divine inspiration must, of course, finally be placed in the power which certain utterances of the church, or certain passages in sacred scriptures, possess of stimulating the worshipper's higher nature, and thus evidencing their own truth by the emphatic response of that new ethical and spiritual life, which they have awakened in the soul. But established priesthoods and religions, if not held constantly in check by liberal culture and sound criticism, readily gravitate in the reverse direction; and instead of proclaiming the true principle that the book derives its moral and spiritual worth from the self-evidencing gems of truth which, in greater or less abundance, enrich its pages, they encourage the utterly false and mischievous doctrine that it is not the scattered divine passages which make the scripture sacred, but that the passages are divine because the whole book in which they are found is known, on other grounds, to be inspired and infallible.

The exposition and criticism of this mistaken

estimate of the true nature of inspiration is fully set forth in the paper contributed by Dr. Drummond to the present volume; but my reason for calling attention to it here is because it has a most important bearing on the relation between Religion and Ethics, seeing that through this false notion of inspiration, into which priests and churches are ever tempted to fall, there is superinduced upon the natural conscience of the sincere believer a factitious, ecclesiastical conscience, and the well-meaning, but misguided, religionist thereby comes to think that he is really doing God's will by indulging in uncharitable judgments, or in legal or social persecutions, against which his natural conscience and heart are ever uttering protests, which even his religious fanaticism finds it very hard to stifle. There is hardly a page of religious history, whether Pagan or Christian, which is not more or less blotted and bloodstained by the maleficent influence of this artificial, ecclesiastical conscience. What but this was it that stoned the prophets, poisoned Socrates, crucified Christ, burnt Servetus; and what but this is it that, now-a-days, is ever seeking to socially excommunicate every good man, who is too loyal to the Divine light within him to acquiesce in any theological dogmas or ecclesiastical usages, which his God-inspired reason and conscience declare to be immoral or irrational?

But it is not necessary here to dwell at greater length on the very unsatisfactory and painful

relations which necessarily arise, when a false notion of the real nature of Divine inspiration has forced Religion and Ethics into most unnatural estrangement and antagonism; for, though this error has done incalculable evil in the past, its power for mischief is rapidly lessening, and but few influential religious teachers would now care to claim infallibility for any Biblical statement, which is clearly at variance with the reason or moral sense.

In the Free Christian Churches, Religion is generally taken to mean, not the acceptance of a certain set of dogmas on the outward authority of Book or Church, but rather self-surrender to the invitations and demands which the universe, or more properly, the Spirit which animates and unifies the universe, utters in each individual soul. In a certain true and most important sense we are each separate persons, and have each a separate moral responsibility, yet in another equally true, and equally important, sense, we are none of us wholly distinct from each other, but are all united in one grand spiritual system or organism, by virtue of that universal spirit of reason, rectitude, and love, which, being incarnate in each one of us, and consciously realised by each in varying degree of clearness and fulness, binds all together in the most intimate and precious relations; and the highest and purest joy which human nature is capable of experiencing is felt when, by virtue of some higher intellectual or moral idea, or some pulsation of sympathy and love,

we escape from the chilling sense of isolation and separateness from nature and from our fellows, and feel in our hearts and minds the delightful throbbing of a common kinship and a common life. Now Religion, I apprehend, arises out of the consciousness (at first very vague and imperfect, but which with culture and reflection becomes clearer and fuller) of the common presence in us, and in nature, of this universal unifying life, which reveals itself to us in the form of reason, righteousness, and love; and the recognition of this holy presence, which ever becomes more distinct as Religion evolves, is naturally and necessarily conjoined with the sentiment of reverence, and a feeling of obligation to follow the leading of this universally immanent Divinity.

The problem, accordingly, which is now increasingly exercising thoughtful minds is, What is the relation of Religion in this higher and truer sense to Ethics in the higher and truer sense, and to this question I will now address myself. How important are the issues it involves will be seen when I remind my readers, that several of the more advanced thinkers of our time seem inclined to maintain that these two words, when correctly and fully understood, mean practically one and the same thing, and that the old distinction between Morality and Religion is destined to become obsolete. "The progress of Religion," says Emerson, "is steadily to its identity with "morals. . . . The next age will behold God in "the ethical laws." And the Rev. W. C. Gannett, in

his very inspiring address on *The Faith of Ethics* declares that "Ethics thought out is religious thought ; " Ethics felt out is religious feeling ; Ethics lived out " is religious life."

But neither Emerson's nor Mr. Gannett's words must be taken too literally, for it is clear, from what they say elsewhere, that neither of these thinkers really means to identify Ethics and Religion, but simply to emphasize the truth that it is mainly on the moral consciousness that all well-grounded theistic faith must ultimately be based. Though Mr. Gannett says that " Ethics thought out is religious " thought," he certainly would not deny that there may be very genuine Ethics (such as the Ethics of the gifted leaders of the Ethical Culture movement), which is not thought out or felt out, and which, therefore, does not become religious thought and feeling in any intelligible sense. And most probably he does not mean to question, that religious thoughts and feelings may enter the soul through other channels than the conscience, but only to maintain that it is to the moral consciousness that the most vital elements in religious faith are due. Surely he would admit that the reason in contemplating the universe, so full of beauty and grandeur, and so suggestive of the idea of infinity, can hardly fail to demand an adequate cause or ground for the marvellous succession, and mutual adaptation of cosmical phenomena. Nor is it through the reason and the conscience alone that we find access to the Eternal ; the

emotions also recognise the Divine presence in outward nature, and few persons will hesitate to endorse Kant's oft-quoted saying, that the starry heavens above, as well as the moral law within, fill the mind with an ever new, an ever rising admiration and reverence. The thought of God, indeed, arises in the soul through every avenue of our being whereby we feel that we transcend the individual and the particular, and share the essence of the universal and the Eternal. The idea of the infinite which Professor Max Muller makes the distinctive mark of Religion, and the sense of dependence on the absolute, in which Schleiermacher finds the essence of faith, both alike call forth that state of thought and feeling, in which the individual loses the sense of his own finitude, and becomes conscious of intimate relationship to the Universal Spirit in nature and humanity.

It is clear, then, that however indispensable ethical ideas and convictions are to religious faith, Religion and Ethics are by no means identical, seeing that, on the one hand, the moral consciousness may exist without fully passing into the religious, and that, on the other hand, religious ideas may come to us not only through the conscience, but through our rational and emotional nature. But while such theistic thinkers as Emerson and Mr. Gannett do not literally mean, that Ethics is Religion and Religion is Ethics, but only that all that is most precious in Religion is intimately and inseparably connected with the sense of duty, there undoubtedly does exist

a strong tendency in contemporary thought—a tendency which finds its most distinct expression in the Ethical Culture movement—to make Religion and Ethics practically the same, by maintaining that all that is rationally tenable in religious belief is limited to the reverent recognition of the absolute and binding character of the moral law. To the Theist, however, Religion means much more than this; and were religious belief cut down to this bare ethical judgment, most devout persons would feel that it had no longer the same power to kindle moral and spiritual enthusiasm, or to afford adequate support in the trials of life. If honest thought compels us to the conclusion that there is nothing else valid in religious ideas save the ethical consciousness, and the ethical consciousness affords no basis for faith in a principle of righteousness and love, as the living spirit of the universe, then, of course, we must strive to make the best of life under these conditions, but before we acquiesce in this most serious curtailment of our spiritual faith, involved in the representation of Ethics as co-extensive with Religion, we are bound to carefully examine the grounds on which this representation rests.

And, first, let us clearly see what is the real question at issue between Theism and Ethical Culture. The essential difference between such Theists as Mr. Gannett or Mr. M. J. Savage, and such Ethical Culturists as Mr. Salter, of Chicago, is best shown by an

illustrative instance. It is a well-known saying of R. W. Emerson that "though ministers of justice fail, justice never fails," and, in like manner, Mr. M. J. Savage, in his treatise on *The Morals of Evolution* (p. 172), says: "Suppose that an immoral man escapes punishment from the laws of the city or the State in which he lives; does he, therefore, escape the natural, necessary penalty of the deeds he has committed? . . . It is simple fact that nobody ever did escape, nobody to-day is escaping, nobody in the future ever can escape, the slightest infraction of any vital law. This, I say, is part of the nature of things." And Mr. Savage goes on to explain the modes in which every violation of the moral law entails its inevitable retribution. So Emerson declares in his profound essay on *Compensation*: "Life invests itself with inevitable conditions, which the unwise seek to dodge, which one and another brags that he does not know; that they do not touch him; but the brag is on his lips, the conditions are in his soul. If he escapes them in one part, they attack him in another more vital part. If he has escaped them in form, and in the appearance, it is because he has resisted his life and fled from himself, and the retribution is so much death." Now, I take it, that these words indicate ethical truth, but they indicate something more also, for the simple recognition that the moral law is *per se* binding on a man, which is all that pure Ethics strictly demands, does not necessarily involve any conviction that justice or righteous-

ness exists at the very heart of the universe, and that, therefore, in some form, every moral self-determination of ours bears its inevitable fruit in the agent's personality. Accordingly, the Ethical Culturist, who will not go beyond what he regards as warranted by our ethical consciousness, and who distrusts, therefore, all appeals to religious faith, emphatically rejects this theory of universal justice set forth by Emerson and by Theists in general.

Thus Mr. Salter, in his eloquent and important treatise on *Ethical Religion* (p. 12), writes as follows :

"We make a myth of love and justice, when we say that they are actually ruling in the world, as Christian believers hold; or, as Emerson says, that 'though ministers of justice fail, justice never,' and that the ethical laws are self-executing, instantaneous. Justice is for ever failing in the world; whenever ministers of justice fail it fails; for it acquires a real existence only in those who execute it. Aside from them, it is only what ought to be, 'nothing that is.'" And in like manner Mr. Salter endorses the saying of Seneca, who, when speaking of the Roman Consul Sulla, called his good fortune "the crime of the Gods," because Sulla, notwithstanding his evident defiance of the moral law, appears, so far as we know, to have lived comfortably, and died peaceably. We here see, I think, the essential difference between Ethics and Religion, for whereas Emerson speaks both ethically and religiously, Mr. Salter's utterance stops short with ethics alone. In

other words, while Ethics simply proclaims the moral obligations we are under towards our fellow-creatures and our own personality, Religion involves not only this recognition of, and obedience to, the moral law, but also the faith that man's moral consciousness is the more or less complete manifestation in him of a supreme principle of righteousness and love, which is inherent in the very essence of the universe.

I maintain, therefore, that a real and most important distinction between Ethics and Religion is rationally tenable, seeing that it is quite possible to recognise the absolute authority of the moral law and to obey that law, without thereby sharing in that faith in, and felt sympathy with, the Universal Spirit which is specifically man's religious consciousness. When Mr. Gannett says that Ethics adequately thought out should issue in religious thought, he may be quite correct, but still the fact remains, that Ethics not unfrequently stops far short of being adequately thought out and felt out, and that many thoroughly moral people do not find themselves impelled to pass through Ethics to Religion. Their character may be essentially good, but their mental attitude is pre-eminently ethical, and not religious. Therefore, I feel myself in profound sympathy with the drift of Mr. Gannett's beautiful and seasonable address, I cannot but think that his mode of treatment, in making no clear distinction between Religion and Ethics, and treating the one as passing into the other by a process

“ ‘ shall be here no question, but assuredly we have
“ ‘ lost faith in common honesty and in the working
“ ‘ power of it,’ ” and then he goes on to recapitulate
instances of the dishonesty of Trade, of adulteration of
every kind, of “ the constant recurrence of bills sent
“ in twice,” of “ bargains made by the skilled prey-
“ ing on the ignorance or the necessities of others,”
of “ honest customers made to pay for bad debts,”
of “ the bribery of sub-traders,” of “ raising a false
“ belief of cheapness,” of “ betraying a confidence
“ fraudulently obtained by pretence of simplicity,”
of “ spurious imitations,” of “ fraudulent Trade
“ Marks,” of “ bribing, scamped work, short lengths
“ and forms of cheating defended as Trade customs.”

It is not now a question of defending any of the
practices against which Archdeacon Farrar protests,
although it may fairly be doubted whether there is
any dishonesty in reckoning a certain percentage
for bad debts as an inevitable part of the cost of an
article of trade ; but I do protest against the
assumption that Trade is, as a whole, less moral in
its conduct than other human occupations, and I
assert that so far as men, speaking in the name of
Religion, have nothing more to say to Trade than
“ be honest,” they err both by superfluity and
defect.

Reserving the error by defect for comment later
on, I maintain that they err by superfluity, because
the morality of the trading community, as a class,
is as pure and exalted as that of any other class, as

pure as that of politicians, of lawyers, of genteel society, of literary men, nay, of the special representatives of Religion. That Trade has its peculiar temptations there is no doubt, but so has every other class of human beings; and that traders yield to temptation in a larger proportion than other classes yield to those that more easily beset them, I deny.

Professor Alfred Marshall, in his recently published volume on "The Principles of Economics," says: "The modern era has undoubtedly given new openings for dishonesty in trade. The opportunities for knavery are certainly more numerous than they were, but there is no reason for thinking that people avail themselves of a larger proportion of such opportunities than they used to do. On the contrary, modern methods of Trade imply habits of trustfulness on the one side, and a power of resisting temptation on the other, which do not exist among a backward people. There are strong reasons for doubting whether the moral character of business in the modern age compares as unfavourably as is sometimes supposed with that of earlier times."

On the Manchester Exchange contracts are daily entered into, thousands in number and of vast amount, without any but verbal ratification—which contracts are nevertheless honourably carried into effect, and supply little employment to the courts of law; and anyone who is fully acquainted with these facts cannot but be struck with the moral strength

of the commercial men who, with constant temptation, in the shape of pecuniary advantage, to the evasion of their moral responsibility, nevertheless adhere loyally to contracts which are not legally binding. Archdeacon Farrar quotes Mr. Herbert Spencer as saying in his article on the Morals of Trade, "That Trade is essentially corrupt." And again Carlyle: "All England, shopkeepers, workmen, all manner of competing labourers, awaken as if with an unspoken but heartfelt prayer to Beelzebub. 'O, help us, thou great lord of shoddy, adulteration, and malfeasance to do our work with a maximum of slimness, swiftness, profit, and mendacity, for the devil's sake. Amen.'"

To prove a negative is at all times a difficult undertaking, and were I called upon to do so it might task the resources of my knowledge; but no such obligation lies upon me. It is the duty of those that frame an indictment against so large a portion of the human race to support it with positive evidence, other than the mere assertions of two Philosophers, however eminent. It may be doubted whether Mr. Spencer or Carlyle had, either of them, a sufficiently intimate knowledge of the details of the vast trade of the world to justify their dogmatising on the subject; but it may be noticed that Carlyle does not refer to Trade alone. With magnificent generalisation he speaks of "All England," and "all manner of competing labourers." Surely this should be taken as applying to all occupations, and

may even be strained to refer to those who "exercise Archidiaconal functions." And in this general sense there is no doubt that there is much truth in it. Who can deny that among the teachers of Religion can be found many that immorally subscribe to statements of belief that their reason does not accept? Who can deny that many remain in the enjoyment of emoluments, specially dedicated to the propagation of dogmas which they themselves absolutely reject, or only accept in a so-called non-natural sense, which is no sense at all? At the Church Congress, which met in Manchester in 1888, a discussion was held as "To what extent results of "historical and scientific criticism, especially of "the Old Testament, should be recognised in "Sermons and Teaching." It is true that the Rev. J. M. Wilson, now Archdeacon of Manchester, in reading the opening paper, maintained, "First, "we must tell the truth and nothing but the truth," and "Secondly, we must tell the whole truth;" but there were not wanting dignitaries of the Church whose attitude towards the question was, "We "must be careful to what persons we recognise the "results of criticism." Professor Cheyne, himself advocating strongly the duty of outspoken truth, said, "One of the greatest difficulties which impede "the recognition of the results of criticism by the "clergy is doubt as to the doctrinal results of such "a recognition." How does the morality of this differ from that of the "spurious imitations," and

"fraudulent trade marks," on which, in 1890, Archdeacon Farrar is so justly severe? If because some traders are dishonest we are to speak of the dishonesty of Trade, are we for the failings of the clergy to dogmatise as to the immorality of Religion? Surely, the higher the plane of existence, the more serious any imperfection therein. It would almost seem from the constant stream of exhortation to the commercial world that the material interests of man's nature were considered the most important.

But a *tu quoque* cannot be advanced as an argument, and these instances are merely adduced in support of the contention that disobedience to the moral law, failure in absolute righteousness, is the natural consequence of Man's imperfection, and that whether in Religion, in Law, in Art, or in Trade, there is to be found that "malfeasance" which Carlyle refers to. Man fails constantly, in every sphere of life, to act up to the highest demands of his conscience, but that this is the case more with traders than with any other class of the community I utterly deny. Why, then, is it so frequently conceived that this is the case? For one reason, because hasty generalisation from insufficient data leads preachers and philosophers, authors and teachers, to affirm and re-affirm these charges, and they are men, able, eloquent and skilled in dialectics, whose voices the people are accustomed to listen to, while the trading world is

dumb, and so judgment goes by default. Tradesmen have not, as a rule, time, nor have they special education or ability, for publicly discussing matters of Ethics, however important, and being, like the rest of the world, deeply penetrated with a sense of other people's imperfections, each supposes that the animadversions refer to his neighbour, and so passes on silent.

Then, too, traders far outnumber the other professions. Manufacturers, Bankers, Merchants, Agents, Brokers, Shopkeepers, Hawkers, form a vast Trade Army, with some of whom we are each and all constantly in contact. Their doings are always before our eyes, and affect almost each movement of our waking hours; whereas Art, Law, Physic, and Literature occupy our attention but casually, and Religion, alas! is too often a matter for Sundays only. Whatever may be ideally true, there is no doubt that to the vast majority of the world its material interests are the most clamant, and as these are just the interests affected by Trade, it is natural that any dissatisfaction with the way in which they are dealt with should express itself clamourously.

Another reason is that the law handed down to us from past generations has been founded on an almost superstitious reverence for the rights of property. In some half-civilised countries, at the present time, human life is held at a very low rate as compared with property. Even in England,

within the last century, offences against property were punished with the utmost rigour of the law, and it is only of late years that this rigour has been modified, and that offences against the person have assumed greater comparative importance. Even now the punishment meted out for wife-beating, scuttling, and crimes of violence is hardly commensurate with that allotted for poaching, embezzling, and petty thefts. And the law is not only the expression of public opinion on these points, but also forms and modifies public opinion concerning them, so that not only are matters of property, and therefore matters of Trade, considered as specially calling for the regulation of law, but any infringement of right connected therewith, though it may not come within legal purview, is specially held to be a subject for moral reprobation. It may be doubted whether a man who sets an example of disloyalty to conscientious conviction does not spread more moral contamination than the trader who deceives in the quality of his goods, but there is no doubt as to which receives the greater condemnation from the world at large.

The whole fabric of Trade is built upon a basis of mutual trust, and it would seem more wonderful that that trust is so seldom misplaced than that we need to lament the rarity of its justification. Think for a moment of the myriads of trade transactions throughout England in the year in which goods are delivered on credit; think of the millions of money

value which is constantly exchanged for bills or cheques, which latter, after all, are no more than promises to pay; think of the few, the very few, people that are competent to form an idea of the market value, of the cost, or of the comparative worth of the article they buy, and then say whether dishonesty can fairly be attributed to Trade as a whole; whether Mr. Herbert Spencer is correct in saying that "Trade is essentially corrupt."

Passing from the question as to the honesty of Trade, can we admit that in any other respect traders are less moral than other people? I venture to think not. We are told that traders are mean and greedy liars, that they are absorbed in the desire for wealth and in the worship of Mammon. Professor Marshall, in the book to which I have already referred, says: "Even the most purely
"business relations of life assume honesty and good
"faith, while many of them take for granted, if not
"generosity, yet, at least, the absence of meanness.
"The pride which every honest man takes in
"acquitting himself well is a most important factor
"of economic efficiency. Many find in business
"work, that seems at first sight unattractive, a
"distinct pleasure, which is partly direct, and partly
"arises from the gratification which the work affords
"to their instincts of rivalry and power. Just as
"a racehorse or an athlete strains every nerve to
"get in advance of his competitors, and delights in
"the strain, so a manufacturer or a trader is often

“stimulated much more by the hope of victory over his rivals than by the desire to add something to his fortune.”

I once had the same view put before me, perhaps more pertinently, if less impartially, by one of the Emperors of Commerce, the late Mr. John Rylands. He said: “People say that I care for nothing but money making and will brook no competitors. It is not so. God has given me one great talent; it is capacity for organisation. He never gave me that talent to wrap in a napkin. I enjoy using it, and the world profits by my success. I do not seek money; it comes to me in the exercise of my talent.” And with reference to the frequent charges of lying advertisements and false representations in business, no one that has not himself been engaged in commerce can be aware how completely a man’s business comes to be to him an entity, dear to his very heart. Originated in his brain; begun, perhaps, in a small way; exposed for long to many dangers and disadvantages; fostered by days of labour and nights of sleepless thought, it becomes to him a cherished object of affection. Though, to others appearing mean, unattractive and sordid, to him it is the embodiment of his lifework, an eidolon, a sentient being which he loves and which repays his affection, and it is not wonderful that its products assume in his eyes a fictitious value. I do not believe that Beecham’s Pills or Eno’s Fruit Salt possess one tithe of the virtues ascribed to them by

the owners of those noted medicines. But then I am not Beecham or Eno. Were I one or the other I might be tempted honestly to believe in their wonderful efficacy, just as now I may, perhaps, cherish too exalted an opinion of the excellence of the articles produced at my own mill. Doubtless Ignatius Loyola thought that the Order of the Jesuits was the most efficacious instrument for the regeneration of the world, and General Booth honestly believes the same of the Salvation Army. It is impossible for any man to see the exact truth concerning a matter which is the offspring of his own brain and the product of his own labour; but the deviation from absolute accuracy is measured by the perfection of his mental lenses rather than of his moral nature. There is a vast difference between unconscious prejudice and conscious lying.

England, we are told, is a nation of shopkeepers, and assuredly there never was a time when that was so true as now. All ranks and classes are seeking the profits of trade, and we must hope that the accession of the educated and cultured to the ranks of commerce will tend to the purification of its customs, and the exaltation of its ideals.

Where can you find more genuine altruism than in this nation of shopkeepers? It is not possible to suggest any scheme for the relief of suffering, for the advancement of education, for the mental and moral elevation of the poor, in which the trading community does not lead the way in pecuniary con-

tributions and personal assistance. The charities of London, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Bristol, and other large cities, bear constant witness that traders have at least this taproot of religion in them, that they love their fellow men. The annals of the Divorce Court and the scandals of impurity of life that reach the public ear, do not reveal any disproportionate immorality in this direction among the trading population. Where can you find a higher ideal of civic duty than is afforded by this class? Occupied by the concerns of their business they are, but they have found time and energy and ability to make the municipal institutions of England conspicuous examples of free, popular, and enlightened government.

Before I pass from this portion of my subject, I cannot but pay a passing tribute to those noble representatives of Trade in my native city of Manchester who, many in number, closely occupied in the concerns of commerce, make large sacrifice of their business hours, and still larger sacrifice of their scanty leisure, of their energy, their brain power, and their pecuniary means, to benefit their fellow creatures in various and fatiguing work in connection with Hospitals, Reformatories, Industrial Schools, Ragged Schools, Recreative Classes, Provident Societies and Dispensaries, Sunday Schools, and other similar agencies.

I do not single these men out as in any way superior to individuals of the same class elsewhere ;

but knowing their uprightness of life, their appreciation of true religion, their power of self-sacrifice, and believing them to be fair representatives of their class in other places, I do repudiate the allegations that prejudice makes in pursuance of its constant habit of generalising from insufficient premises. But the depreciatory estimate of Trade and traders advanced by many exponents of Religion has more than a direct effect in placing in antagonism these two, which I have affirmed to be natural conditions of human life, having co-relation each to the other. It has also produced a reflex repulsive action on the part of traders from Religion. This does not seem to be any more defensible than the tendency to hold Religion as something superior to and apart from Trade, but it undoubtedly exists; and the Agnosticism of the present day would seem to indicate that it is a growing tendency.

There are not a few upright, honourable men in the ranks of Commerce who honestly believe that he who openly seeks the sanctions of Religion must necessarily be a bad business man, and is probably a hypocrite. Such a one has frequently held this argument, if the statement of a prejudice can be so-called, "No good comes of crossing breeds that are essentially different. Your full-blooded white man may be approximately just, true and moral, so may your full-blooded Hindoo or Negro; but your Eurasian or Mulatto combines the vices of both races, and has the virtues of neither. Just

“so with your religious merchant or shopkeeper. “He is not to be trusted either in Religion or “Trade!” How often does one hear the expression of similar prejudice under various forms? During the cotton famine in Lancashire, when little but Indian cotton could be found for use, one of our leading manufacturers entered his blowing room, where the cotton is cleaned and prepared for spinning, and saw in a corner of the room a pile of stones. “What are those?” he asked the overlooker. “Oh,” was the reply, “I call “them missionaries!” “What do you mean?” “Why, we used to get cotton, and nought but “cotton, in the bales; but since they’ve taken “to sending missionaries out to India, I reckon “they’ve taught them different, and so I call them “missionaries!” No doubt, the same incident might have furnished to many exponents of Religion a text from which to dilate on the iniquities of Trade. And so we see that as Trade carries modern civilisation into distant countries, and with it a knowledge of the Christian Religion, the evils which naturally arise in the ferment of novel conditions of existence are attributed to Trade or to Religion, not according to evidence, but according to the bias of the narrator. There is in both these attitudes of mind the same defect—viz., that moral delinquencies are alleged to be, not the result of the imperfection of human nature, but of the individual, ranging himself under this or that of two banners, which,

in truth, are not antagonistic, but belong to the same army, and are raised under the command of the same Great King.

It cannot be denied that working from the outside and in antagonism to certain trades, Religion has modified and even changed their course with manifest advantage to general commerce and to the moral and social condition of the world. Such an instance is afforded by the Abolition of Slavery in the West Indies. Granville Sharp, Clarkson, Wilberforce were men animated by deep religious conviction, which forbade them to rest while the horrors of the Slave Trade were unacknowledged and uncondemned. The first Committee of the Abolition Society were nearly all members of the Society of Friends, and it was distinctly on religious grounds that they protested against the iniquities of the trade, and devoted their energies and their means to its abolition. Wilberforce says: "God "has set before me two great objects, the abolition "of the Slave Trade and the reformation of "manners." We find him, on the eve of a great debate on the subject in the House of Commons, writing in his Diary, "May God bless me in this "great work I have now in hand. May I look to "Him for wisdom and strength and the power of "persuasion, and may I surrender myself to Him as "to the event, and ascribe to Him all the praise if "I succeed, and if I fail say from the heart, 'Thy "'will be done.'" We know how his prayer was

answered. With a view to extend lawful commerce with Africa, and show by its success that the Slave Trade was no necessary concomitant with it, Wilberforce and others founded the Sierra Leone Company, proving that religious conviction may be the very foundation of commercial enterprise; and whether in the inception of his campaign against the cruel evils of slavery, or in the nineteen years during which he devoted to it his constant and most strenuous energies, or in the final hour of victory, it was Religion that strengthened, sustained, and animated him, Religion of the truly Christian type—love to God and love to man.

So, too, although the Abolition of Slavery in America was ultimately brought about by political necessity, we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that the religious instincts of the country had, during many years, accumulated such a force of public opinion against the institution that it was practically moribund when the war between North and South finally put an end to it.

Another instance of the influence of Religion on Trade may be noted where that influence has not been wielded from the outside and in antagonism, but from within, and has indeed been the very *fons et origo* of commercial enterprise.

The historian of the Co-operative Movement (Holyoake) might possibly not admit the assertion that Religion had any part in its conception or furtherance, but we,—who do not regard Religion as

a matter of creeds and ceremonies but as a life, the Christian life, in which mutual helpfulness comes only second in the list of divine commands,—we cannot fail to see the spirit of Christ's Religion in that organisation which seeks to make Trade mutually profitable to all concerned in it. Holyoake tells us that Owen was the founder of Co-operation, and says, "Owen's religion, though weak "in creeds and collects, rendered humanity service"; and year by year such men are becoming more and more the religious leaders of mankind. It was Owen that suggested the formation of the self-supporting Pauper Colonies of Holland, on the success of which General Booth greatly relies as proving the possibility of parts of his own scheme for relieving the unemployed. The weavers and mechanics, shoemakers and cotton spinners, of Rochdale, who originated the first practical and successful effort at co-operative production might possibly repel the suggestion that Religion had been their actuating motive in founding the new form of industry, but the fact remains that the keystone of the new system was "doing unto others as you "would be done by."

M. LeClaire, one of the most successful decorative manufacturers in France, was an instance of the conscious influence of Religion manifesting itself in co-operative trading. During the last year of his life the profits of his business amounted to £17,000, of which he distributed three quarters to

his workpeople in excess of their wages. His will proclaims the motive of his actions. He says: "I believe in the God who has written in our hearts the law of duty, the law of progress, the law of the sacrifice of oneself for others. I am the humble disciple of Him that taught us to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. In this sense it is that I desire to continue a Christian unto my last breath." It has been said that LeClaire was a Christian philanthropist, and not a co-operative tradesman. That he was both is shown by the fact that since his death the business has continued to flourish on the lines laid down by him, and last year yielded a profit of £17,600, of which one-half was divided among the workmen, 889 in number, adding 22½ per cent to the wages they had already received, one quarter was added to the funds of the Mutual Aid Society to provide pensions for the workpeople, and one quarter went to the two managers.

It is true that in antagonism both to the Anti-Slavery Propaganda and Co-operation may be found the names of many and prominent exponents of the popular Religions of the day, but to state that is only to state that man is liable to error—man, that is, in the abstract, cleric or layman, trader or non-trader; that custom stales the conscience, and self-interest blinds the eyesight; or if it proves aught else, it only goes to prove that faith in creeds is quite

compatible with insusceptibility to moral evil and social needs.

It may be briefly noted that, notwithstanding the extent to which Religion has, in superior virtue, held aloof from Trade, and Trade has in its turn ignored and set at naught Religion, the services rendered by the one to the other are neither few nor unimportant. The mainspring of the life of Trade is quickened and increased intercourse between different countries. Thus was the civilisation of India, carried into the remotest parts of Asia by the wandering Buddhists, animated by a desire to spread their religious faith, and carrying with them the traditions of a trade in which they themselves did not partake. Thus was Trade stimulated by the religious zeal of the followers of Mahomet as they bore the Crescent from land to land.* So, too, the Crusaders, in their fervent desire to rescue the birth-place of Christ from Paynim hands, carried to and fro the seeds of unknown arts and of future commerce. Just so have Xavier, Heber, Patteson, Livingstone, and many others, endured untold hardships, traversed arid deserts, pathless forests, and unknown seas, to bear witness to the heathen of the eternal verities of Religion, and, in so doing, have opened vistas of Trade development surpassing

* The Arabs were the first people to initiate external trade to any considerable extent, and the part they played in spreading commerce and its accompanying civilisation is sometimes insufficiently realised.

the dreams of the wildest imagination. On the other hand, Trade increases wealth, and wealth gives power, and makes beneficent action possible. It was Florence, enriched by successful trading, that sheltered Savonarola from the wrath of the Pope of Rome, and nurtured the struggling infancy of the Religious Reformation. It was the Burghers of the Netherlands that for four hundred years afforded an asylum to the Waldenses, Albigenses, Lollards, and other Reformers. And it was these same traders that bade defiance to Philip of Spain, and gained freedom for the Protestant Religion, as well as their civic rights, by thirty years of wasting war, endured with incredible patience and indomitable fortitude.

Wealth removes many temptations to sin. Where material conditions are very depressed, spiritual development can hardly be expected. It is found by experience that it is necessary to alleviate bodily want before spiritual needs can be supplied or even awakened. The moral condition of the people of England at the present time is infinitely superior to that of eighty years ago; but that improvement has been concurrent with, and consequent on, a development of Trade, during which the wealth of the country has, in the words of Mr. Gladstone, increased by "leaps and bounds."

Canon Fremantle, in his address at the Hull Congress on this subject, says. "Trade is the means of drawing men and nations together in

“friendly intercourse, and of begetting the sense “of brotherhood in ever widening circles.” The history of the relations between France and England during the last thirty years testifies to this. Beginning with mutual suspicion and hatred, nurtured by long years of aggression and war, and stimulated by racial and religious differences, the closer intercourse and community of interests brought about by the Commercial Treaty of 1860 have resulted in a more brotherly feeling and in mutual respect and understanding. The course of French politics is followed with sympathetic interest in this country; and though, at the commencement of her great struggle with Germany, public opinion in England was not entirely with her, the defeat and abasement of our ancient enemy aroused no feeling of exultation, but only respect for the bravery of her soldiers, and regret at the inefficiency of her generals. France and England are now truly sister nations; and though erroneous principles of trade have relaxed the commercial ties that bound us so closely together, we may with confidence trust that the sympathy generated by those commercial ties may continue to develop and strengthen, and help to bring about the time when the perfect brotherhood of man may realise the Kingdom of God upon the earth.

Archdeacon Farrar tells us that what we have to do is to inculcate on traders (1) Honesty, (2) Truthfulness, (3) Contentment, and he says: “When we

“turn to the law of contentment we are at the root of the matter.” As for honesty and truthfulness, let them be urged on all classes; but contentment is a different thing. Contentment is the essence of inaction, stupor, death, whether in material, mental, or spiritual things. Contentment has always been held out as the duty of the many by the few. It has been for centuries regarded by those that have much as the root of the matter, and inculcated as the primary obligation on those that have little. But people now-a-days are beginning to realise more and more that it is the Gospel of Discontent that needs preaching. How is contentment consistent with aspiration? Man, created in the image of God, walks through the world with head erect, with eyes gazing onward and upward, ever aiming at higher developments, material, mental, and spiritual. As a fundamental necessity of his being, he seeks after God, that is he seeks after perfection, and, unable to comprehend the infinite, he finds the satisfaction of his higher nature in the perfecting of any little bit of God's universe that lies to his hand. Michael Angelo said, “Nothing makes the soul so pure, so religious, as the endeavour to make something perfect, for God is perfection, and whoever strives for it strives for something God like.” This is true of all lives and all pursuits; and the trader seeking to develop his trade, to establish his credit, to improve his productions, and spread far and wide a demand for them, is following the

irresistible and beneficent dictates of a law that in all things makes for perfection, not contentment.

I have said that the improvement of man's material conditions is the necessary preliminary to his mental and spiritual growth. Will contentment alleviate the physical condition of the submerged tenth? Will contentment relax the throttling hand of pauperism on the throat of the poor and the needy? Will contentment clothe the naked, feed the hungry, teach the ignorant, or minister to the sick and dying? No! For all these things material prosperity is needed, and that cannot be attained without active, energetic, and enlightened commerce. But necessary as this is it may be, and should be, commerce animated and actuated by Religion. Not the religion of theological creeds but the religion of Christ, the religion that makes love to God and love for man the inspiration of life in all its varied phases. The religion of theological creeds teaches that faith is all important, even when it does not teach that righteousness is filthy rags. A higher authority than the creeds has said, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." This is the difference between theology and Religion. Theology divides, Religion embraces! Theology chills, Religion kindles! The reason is clear. Theology is man's puny thought about God; Religion is God's love animating the

human soul. The creeds are outside human life, but Religion is of its very essence. Matthew Arnold asks, "What is the object of Religion?" and his reply is "Conduct!" Stating it somewhat differently, let us say that Religion is life at its fullest and best!

I do not for one moment assume that the professors of theological creeds hold that Religion has no greater word to say to Trade than Be Honest! Be Truthful! Be Content! My argument is that though they preach a nobler Gospel than this, and often enforce it by lives of the purest effort and self-sacrifice, yet the supernatural position which they claim for Religion hinders its acceptance; that the habit of mind of the priesthoods of centuries clings to them still, and that regarding Trade as something inferior and Religion as something extra-natural, they assume incongruity, and then wonder that the two do not coalesce.

Now, what has Religion to say to trade besides inculcating morality? Has she nothing to say of making money from the vices of the people? When will another Clarkson, another Wilberforce, arise to save the people from the slavery of drink? Has Religion nothing to say of grinding the faces of the poor? Sweaters' dens, miasmatic workshops, poor human beings toiling night and day for dry bread and a cup of weak tea! These things are not generally held as immoral; but the Religion of Christ should have a word to say regarding them.

Has religion nothing to say to the trader, as well as to others, of holiness, righteousness, self sacrifice, of the cup of cold water given in the name of the Master, of the Good Samaritan, and how he treated him who fell among thieves ?

I have indicated how men of business have done great good in the exercise of their calling, without conscious design on their part, but as a necessary result of the practice of their trade and in furtherance of their own material interests; and how, too, they have in this way unconsciously rendered considerable services to religion. It has also been pointed out how, apart from their business life, they have contributed largely in personal effort and in pecuniary support to the best social, political, and religious objects, doing this latter consciously and at great sacrifice of their own personal and business interests. Many tradesmen in all countries have thus earned for themselves the most cordial respect of the best minds of the communities in which they have lived. But has not Religion a word to say in favour of something more than this ? Is it not possible for a tradesman, not outside of his trade but within it, to be a promoter of all that is true and worthy and of good report ? Is it not possible for him, not in addition to but in virtue of his business, to be, as far as the imperfection of human nature permits, truly religious—perfect as a citizen and a man ? Is not this just the word that Religion should say, not to tradesmen

only, I grant, but to every class and every individual? Still, is it not the word that needs saying, and is it not on Religion that the duty devolves of urging it with all the sanction of her divine power? I am tempted again to show that this Religion within Trade life is not only a possible ideal, but one that is frequently realised in actual practice; but I must not linger, and however much that is the case such teaching is always imperatively necessary, and is more necessary amid the present complicated conditions of Trade, than in the past when simpler methods prevailed.

We are all of us too much in the habit of considering the elements of our environment as privileges instead of trusts. The Scholar feels acutely the privilege he enjoys in the acquisition of learning, and in constant converse with the noblest minds of every age and clime. Does he always regard it as a trust that God has given him to be used for the benefit of mankind? The Artist glories in his enjoyment of the beauties of nature and art. Does he always remember that his talent is not only for his own profit or pleasure, but also that through him the world may be raised to higher spheres of æsthetic development? And so the Trader is keenly alive to the profit and power that naturally attach to the able and successful exercise of his calling, but is he always equally ready to realise the incalculable importance of the trust which God has thereby committed to his charge for the benefit of

the individuals with whom he has business relations and of the world at large? It is to be feared not. Granted that the first duty of the trader is to them of his own household, to provide for them the means of healthy living, reasonable enjoyment, and bodily, mental, and spiritual development. Granted that the command is that he shall love his neighbour, not more than, but as himself. Granted that he may have special interests, social, political, or religious, that take of his means, his time, and his thought. Grant all this. And is there no duty remaining to his weavers, his clerks, his navvies, or his workmen? Does he not hold in trust for them as well as for others? He pays them their wages. Good! But are those wages such as may enable them to live worthily and well, or are they the lowest pittance that competition forces them to accept? If I have 500 men working for me, and, by screwing them down 1s. a week each in their wages, am able at the end of the year to give £1,000 to the building of a church, and put £300 into my own pocket, am I fulfilling the trust which the Almighty has committed to my charge? I do not ignore the economic necessity of paying a market price for labour, but I maintain that, between the lowest competitive price and excessive payment therefor, there is a mean value which is at once economically and morally satisfactory. That I pay wages is a necessity on my part, and any benefit to my fellow-men therefrom is not attributable

as virtue to me; but if I am careful to see that the toils of labour are fairly remunerated, and sweetened by kindly consideration and friendly sympathy, then, and then only, do I fulfil my trust as an employer of labour.

So, too, in relation to the quality of the goods that I produce or sell, I have a trust to discharge. Not to make or sell at a loss! Not to make or sell goods of any particular quality! Buyers may want margarine and not butter, horse flesh and not beef, cotton, silk, or woollen weighted with foreign matter instead of in their native purity. But I am under a fiduciary obligation to make or sell that which is what I call it, and to call it only what it is. Nay, I should further aim to achieve that which is best in the particular line of my trade, and, if I make margarine, make the best margarine that I can, and sell it only as margarine.

There is undoubtedly too much of a disposition to regard Trade merely as a means to an end, that end being the acquirement of money, which afterwards may or may not be used for good purposes. Should not Religion, rising to the height of her own great argument, justify the ways of God to men by urging that Trade is a means to personal salvation and the redemption of the world?

There is not in the details of Commerce, many and complicated as they are, one in which the Christian virtues may not find ample exercise with beneficial results to the trade itself. Buying in the

cheapest and selling in the dearest market, in the fullest sense of the phrase, is the necessary condition of successful trade, but, just as experience proves that the highest price is not always the most remunerative at which to sell, so, too, the lowest price is not always the cheapest at which to buy. The religious equation needs to be taken into account if trade is to be successful in the truest and fullest sense. The more perfect the man, the more perfect his work! No man without the calming, steadying inspiration of religious principle is at his best, so therefore, without that, his work cannot be at its best. A book called "God in Business" has recently been published in America, which sets out to prove that God constantly intervenes in business affairs for the benefit of those who put their trust in Him. Whether He does confer on His creatures material benefits in direct answer to prayer is a much controverted question, and the incidents bearing thereon are, on the one hand, explained as mere coincidences, on the other as direct interpositions of Divine Providence. But of this there is no doubt, that the Peace of God calms the nerves, clears the judgment, quickens the perception, restrains the temper, and renders man more apt, ready, and effective in the discharge of his business responsibilities. Trade, like other occupations, demands a full equipment of mental and physical capacity, and, equally with Art and Science, requires some special endowment, so that it is not

possible to say that no religious man ever fails in business. But it would be safe to predicate of such an one that his success would be more complete and his failure less irretrievable than it otherwise would be. In the frequent and sudden storms that arise in Trade, and at times threaten to overwhelm the most prudent and far-seeing amongst us, there is no commercial man so safe, so certain to bring his affairs to a happy issue, as he who leans upon the arm of the living God.

Both the advocates and critics of Trade have too much regarded it as a mere means of money making. If both these classes will insist on its being a natural condition of humanity, in which God intends His children to grow into the fulness of the perfect man, we shall have gained one step towards that end. An American writer says: "If we cannot realise our ideal, we can at least idealise our real." George Herbert expressed the same thought in his verse, "Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws, makes that and the action fine."

That Trade is incompatible with Religion is akin to that view of the Divine nature which insists that all mankind became sinners in Adam's fall, and that God pre-ordains vast millions of His children to everlasting torment. "Yet I doubt not thro' the Ages one increasing purpose runs, and the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns;" and that the Almighty Father, having placed none of His children on this earth so that their faces are

hidden from His light, means that each in His own place shall so develop, morally and spiritually, that in His good time they shall see His face in the light of the perfect day.

Let man, trading man, rise to the dignity of his own God-given nature, and realise that within his own environment there is everything necessary to his highest aspiration and fullest development, and the Divine purpose for the spiritual welfare of mankind will be aided and not hindered. Let *excellence* and not *sufficiency* be our aim in all our transactions. Let charity in its widest sense be with us all day, and not wait outside the office door until business hours are over. Let brotherly love be the mainspring of our conduct to all mankind, and love to God be engrained in every fibre of our being, and we shall find that there is no incompatibility between Religion and Trade, but that Religion can idealise Trade, and Trade realise Religion.

RELIGION AND CITIZENSHIP.

By RICHARD BARTRAM.

THE idea conveyed by the word "Citizenship" is necessarily connected with the possession of a very large measure of personal freedom on the part of those who claim to partake of its privileges or its responsibilities. In those countries where the form of government is either an autocracy or a despotism it would sound absurd to speak of the inhabitants as citizens. They are the subjects of the ruler, or the people of the country, or collectively they are the nation. It is in those countries where a constitution exists, by which even kings and princes are bound, that one begins to regard the people in the light of citizens. In such countries, for instance, as Russia and Turkey, one feels that the term "Russian citizen" or "Turkish citizen," if used at all, is inappropriate, while on the other hand to speak of "American citizens" or "British citizens" seems fitting and natural. It is true that, even in England we speak of "British subjects," but that only serves to confirm the view just ex-

pressed, for it is either a survival from the time when the Crown was an active and vital force in the government of the country, or it is just because the very fact that there is a monarchy involves, to a certain extent, the idea of subjection. This is wholly opposed to the true conception of Citizenship. A faithful and loyal subject is one who is simply content to obey the laws or wishes of those who are in authority over him : it is not for him to question those laws ; they exist for his guidance, he exists in order to obey them. His duty is simple ; practically he has no responsibilities in the matter. Directly he begins to question, or to allow his conscience to override his obedience to, legal authority, he ceases to be a loyal subject. A citizen, on the contrary, is something more than this automatic instrument of a ruler's will. He has a share in the government of his fellows ; he has a voice in the destinies of his nation. That casts upon him obligations, the extent of which is to be measured either by his own individual powers or by the limitations placed upon him by his fellow citizens. Whether it be better to be the *citizen* of a free country, or a *subject* of a despot, it is not to my purpose to discuss. For the moment all I am concerned to assert is the distinction which exists between the two.

In England, if the definition just given be accepted, it cannot be denied that such a thing as Citizenship exists, and has existed for some time past. It has grown, too ; its sphere of influence is larger ; its oppor-

tunities of action are increased. No one who has studied the history of the present century, or who has simply observed the drift of events in England during the present reign, can doubt the change that has come over us here. Wealth and rank will always exert considerable influence, even when the one has been ill-gotten, and the other unworthily bestowed, but neither can compete with the power which is in the hands of a Democracy closely knit together. Government in this country is no longer the prerogative either of the Crown or of a few families; it is neither aristocratic nor plutocratic, but is democratic. In nearly all our institutions this change is gradually taking place. Prerogative and privilege are not what they were. I am not now saying whether or not this is a change for the better. Such a discussion is better suited to other pages than these. I do not suppose, however, that any thoughtful or observant person will be found to deny the fact of the change, and this is all which, for the present, it is necessary to consider. For, assuming the fact, what does it involve? It involves a complete revolution in much that has hitherto been done in the name, but not by the authority, of the people of this country. They have acquired a responsibility which they never possessed before. In those times when political power was vested in the hands of the few, the mass of the people were not called upon, they were unable, to exercise either a restraining or an encouraging influence. Now this is not so, and

the people, the citizens of England, cannot place on other shoulders the responsibility for acts which they either tacitly or actively sanction. It is just this responsibility which goes by the name of Citizenship, which it is part of my purpose to consider in this essay.

It may be well just here to look at some of the duties which are cast upon a citizen of this country, taking that as a type of other free countries simply. We have seen that the primary duty of all good citizens, like that of all loyal subjects, is obedience to the law. So long as it is the law a good citizen will respect it, and obey it, even if he be of opinion that it is a mischievous or an unrighteous law ; though in that case he will do his best to get it repealed or altered. In this respect his duty as an individual and as a citizen may clash. In the former capacity he may feel called upon, in obedience to his conscience or his reason, to refuse to do that which he is commanded to do ; as a citizen he has to bear in mind that other wills, other interests, other needs have to be consulted before he can do exactly as he thinks right. It may be right that his duty as a citizen should yield to his individual duty ; it may be equally right that the latter should give way. This must be a question of conscience, upon which few are able to express an opinion except for themselves. Undoubtedly many reforms have been effected, many iniquities swept away by men and women who would never

bow the knee to constituted authority, never accept the thralldom of any custom, however ancient, nor yield to any persuasion, however powerful, that did not receive the sanction of conscience. Whatever praise we may accord to these, ofttime, martyrs, they cannot claim to be ranked as good citizens. A law-breaker may of course be the cause of better laws being made, but he is scarcely entitled to be called a law-maker. It is important to observe this distinction, because it is too often assumed, in the loose fashion in which we use our ordinary language, that there is little or no difference between a man as a citizen, and a man as an individual. There is a difference, though I admit that it is no easy task always to discern it.

While it is the duty of citizens to render obedience to the laws, it is equally their duty to see that those laws are reasonable and just; that they are not made in the interest of classes, unless indeed it be of classes specially needing protection; that they should be applicable to rich and poor alike, equitable and not arbitrary in their application, and, while allowing much individual freedom, that they should not be opposed to the interests of the community. It is also the duty of citizens to see that the laws are ably administered; that they are not converted into engines of oppression or means of personal aggrandisement; that wrongs are not perpetuated, nor right set aside, under the sanction of a perverted legality. But how is this to be done in a State like England?

In a small free country there is, of course, proportionately a greater direct control by individual citizens, than there can be in a large one. The larger the country the more must the principle of representation come into play, and it is largely, though not entirely, through his representative that the individual citizen must exercise his control or influence. In this country this principle is seen in operation in various ways. The laws by which the country is governed are practically made by about 600 men, chosen for the purpose by and from the citizens themselves, that is the male citizens. The full privilege and responsibility of citizenship have at present been denied to women, a state of things which cannot long continue, though there are ways in which women can, and do, influence the selection of representatives in the House of Commons. These representatives again, while they exercise only a partial and indirect influence in guiding the relations of this country with other countries, leaving these to be dealt with and carried out by the executive, or the government for the time being, have still the power of controlling that executive, and thus become responsible for its actions. In this view, therefore, it is true to say that the government of this country is on the whole democratic; it is a government of the people by the people themselves.

In addition to the power entrusted to the people at large to make the laws by which they are governed through their Parliamentary representa-

tives, there are powers given to the citizens of particular localities to make, if not laws, at any rate regulations, which, within a certain limited area, have the force of laws, the proper, just, and fair application of which must greatly affect the health and the mental and physical well-being of those who live under their jurisdiction. Here again the representative principle is seen in action, and through the instrumentality of Councils—County or Borough—Boards of Health, School Boards, Boards of Guardians, Vestries, and other like bodies, the local self-government of districts and municipalities is carried on. Here and there we come across relics of a time when citizenship was not so well understood as it is at the present day, and there are modes of local government in which those who govern are in no sense representatives, save of themselves and their immediate friends, but such instances are an anachronism, the whole tendency of modern times being in direct opposition to them.

Having thus briefly indicated the way in which the government of this country is carried on, it remains to consider the mode in which an individual citizen can exercise his duties and give effect to his rights of Citizenship. A citizen must either be a representative of his fellows, or one of the represented. From the nature of the case it is obvious that the latter must be considerably in excess of the former. To them is mainly left the duty and power of selecting fitting representatives,

whether it be for the Imperial Parliament, or for the various Local Municipal Institutions already mentioned; and it depends largely on the wisdom and sense with which this choice is made, whether we may hope to get good laws enacted, or wise laws properly administered. A citizen, in his capacity of one of the represented, is called upon to select his representative, and he records his selection by giving that person his vote. A citizen in his character of representative has to record his approval of certain principles, or measures, or his disapproval of certain methods of procedure in much the same way. Of course, it is not suggested that the duties of a citizen begin and end at the ballot box; there are many duties which the law casts upon him which have nothing to do with the selection of representatives, or with the making of laws, though they may be imposed upon him in the course of the administration of some particular law. The duties of Citizenship are confined within no such narrow a compass as the mere recording of a vote; that is but the legal and constitutional method of carrying out one, and indeed a very important, duty, which the privilege of Citizenship bears with it. I have specially instanced this because it is one of those frequently recurring events in the life of a citizen, that brings to his mind the fact that he is not here simply as an individual, but that he has relation to the lives, the happiness, the well-being of those amongst whom he dwells. Scarcely a year passes

that a man is not called upon to exercise his privilege of Citizenship in some way or other.

In all cases where a selection has to be made, it is obvious that various considerations will operate on the minds of those upon whom the responsibility of selection is cast. Without attributing improper, or sordid, or interested motives to anyone, it is clear that differences of temperament, or of training, or circumstances, will make men regard both measures and men from opposite standpoints, and this cannot fail to have its effect on the ultimate choice which they make. In democratic governments it is essential that the view of the majority should prevail; while, on the other hand, it is the right of the minority to have liberty to convert the majority to its own view. It is one of the privileges of Citizenship, as it has already been defined, that its possessors, even when in a minority, should be permitted to influence public opinion, before which all majorities must ultimately bow. This is done in various ways practically known only in free countries, through the press, through public meetings, and by means of the speech and communications of every-day life. It is scarcely necessary to give examples of the way in which this has already been done, or of how it is sought to be done at the present time. They will occur to every reader. All that it is needful to point out is, that they are simply illustrations of the method in which citizens seek to discharge their responsibilities. It very often happens that in this way, that

is in contributing to the formation of public opinion, men and women render more effective service than those who are entrusted with the duty of legislation, or of carrying the law into effect. It very rarely happens that any great reform is initiated inside Parliament; it usually is the result of outside pressure brought to bear on it through the various instrumentalities already indicated. But it must be borne in mind that ultimately the shaping of reform has to be effected in a more definite way.

What has been said is descriptive of what in theory, and occasionally in practice, is the way in which the citizens of this country exercise their privileges. Unfortunately, in this, as in many other cases, the theory and the practice do not wholly coincide. All those who might, do not care to use them; all those who would wish to do so, are not in a position enabling them. The best men, that is the most fit, are not always chosen to represent their fellows; self-interest, and not the common-weal, too often regulates the votes and the actions of those who get elected to offices of trust; narrow, sordid, and low views too often prevail, where the necessity for sentiments of an exactly opposite character exists. Often enough it happens that these debased views only too accurately reflect the opinions of those by whom they are elected; those who entertain the opposite not caring to take any part in the election, and maintaining a studious indifference to all such mundane affairs. It is no uncommon thing to hear

men say that they avoid politics, and will have nothing to do with the conflicts of parties. In one sense they might as well say that they avoid the atmosphere in which they live, and decline to have anything to do with the variations of climate with which we are favoured. By abstaining from all active interference in political matters a man does not rid himself of responsibility; his very abstention may be quite as effective in furthering the cause or the views he abhors as if he took an active part in promoting them. There are persons who go through life under the impression that by adopting a policy of masterly inactivity they escape all responsibility. Of course there are many cases where a man need not assume a responsibility at all, but where that once exists mere inaction does not enable him to wash his hands of it. And in a free country a man does not shake off his obligations by merely holding aloof from public affairs.

It may be said that the amount of responsibility is so infinitesimal, that it is shared with so many millions of his fellows, that a man need not concern himself very greatly about it. But moral obligations cannot be measured in this fashion, nor can an exact apportionment be made so as to define with accuracy the extent of a man's duty. Those who acknowledge moral obligations, and it is to such that this essay is, in the main, addressed, will not be too eager to place any limit upon them. Rather they will welcome the light that may dispel any doubt that may have

arisen as to whether, in any particular case, such obligations exist. Make it clear that they do, and there will be no desire to evade them. The size of the obligation is not to them a matter of debate, unless, indeed, a conflict may arise, or seem to arise, between opposing duties.

On this subject of Politics let me say just a few words, in which I will strive to avoid giving offence, and to make them as little of a partisan character as possible. It is too often asserted, or at any rate assumed, that there is something so foul, debasing, and immoral in Politics that no man of any self-respect should have anything to do with it. Even when this extreme is not reached, it is said, with a sort of cynicism, that as you cannot touch pitch without being defiled, so connection with Politics is morally contaminating and degrading. To both these views I demur. What is Politics? Primarily, it is a question between conflicting theories as to the best mode of government, which exists in countries where despotism prevails quite as much as it does in free countries; though there is this difference, that in the former the conflict is confined in a small circle, while in the latter these theories which are in dispute have to be considered and voted upon by the many. For various reasons one theory will approve itself to one set of persons, another to another set. In this there is nothing wrong or immoral. The majority holding one theory will endeavour to reduce it into practice; the minority will seek to

seize hold of such weak points as this practical application may bring to light, and will thus endeavour to convert, at least, some of the majority to their view. Again, there is not in this anything of which one need be ashamed. It is legitimate, reasonable, and natural. If this were all that is involved in the meaning of the word Politics, I do not suppose that any religious-minded man or woman would have much complaint to make about politicians. Unquestionably, however, there is more in it than a simple conflict of opposing theories. In a constitutionally free country like England, there is a tendency to make Politics or political questions a contest between persons or parties. It would take up far more space than can be allotted to it in this essay to discuss fully the advantages and disadvantages which attend government by party. They are admirably summed up by Mr. W. E. H. Lecky in his "History of England in the Eighteenth Century."* I may, however, be permitted to point out that some of the disadvantages are not inherent, but are excrescences on the system which could, and should, be got rid of. I will go further, and say that in most, if not all, cases the best way to get rid of them, or to prevent them getting the upper hand, is for religious men and women to take their share of public life, and by precept and example to institute a better state of things. By standing aloof, they allow the irreligious to mono-

* Vol. III., 2nd edition, 1883, pp. 103-110

polish the powers of government, and to run the machine in a way ill calculated to do service to either Religion or Morals. They permit the great privileges of Citizenship to be exercised by those who think more of self-interest than they do of the well-being of others, who value a party victory as of higher value than a moral triumph.

If, as is too frequently the case, there is a tendency on the part of those who take one view, or entertain almost identical opinions, to shape themselves into a party, and in the process of strengthening that party to shut their eyes to much that is morally mischievous, surely it is better for those who are keen enough to perceive the evil, and strong enough to defy it, to make their protest heard and felt from within the ranks of a party whose general aims are the same as their own, than to stand outside, taking no part, and raising no voice of disapproval. The old notion that in withdrawing oneself entirely from the world, its pleasures and pursuits, one was adopting the best possible preventive against personal wrong-doing was essentially a selfish one ; the drawing a distinct line between what is secular and what is religious has, too, been productive of mischief, as it has led to a purely arbitrary, if not fictitious, standard of right and wrong. It may be true, as the old saying has it, that one cannot touch pitch without being defiled, but are not we bound, in the interests of cleanliness, at times to defile ourselves? “Do ye not perceive,” said Jesus, “that

“ whatsoever thing from without entereth into the
“ man, it cannot defile him? ”, answering his own
question, “ That which cometh out of the man,
“ that defileth the man,” not those with whom he
associates, but himself alone.

It is quite true that in political life there are men
who, to put it mildly, are not saints, who make use
of the opportunities which such a life affords for
advancing purely selfish interests, and who are not
too scrupulous in the way they set about it. Un-
doubtedly both in Parliamentary and Municipal life
there are those who regard success there as a means
to serve personal ambition. But it is equally true
that in the House of Commons, and on the various
Boards and Councils, to which is entrusted the work
of Local Government, there are men whose aim and
purpose are to render good services to their fellow
men ; who have no other ambition than to make
their country great in the truest sense of the word, or
to help to make the lives of those who are little able
to help themselves better and sweeter, healthier and
nobler. It may be that these men are in a minority,
that the selfish outnumber the unselfish ; if so, there
is all the more reason why religious men, who may
be supposed to sympathise with the efforts of the
latter, should endeavour to strengthen their hands.
As it is, owing largely to the apathy, the neglect of
duty, as I venture to assert, of those who maintain
a lofty indifference to such matters, the efforts of
reformers are crushed, and the administration of

affairs gets into the hands of men who are ill-fitted for the task. It is not contended that every capable man should become a local administrator; it is obvious that this would be impossible, but if each man were to exercise his right as a citizen there would be a greater chance of capable men coming to the front, and being chosen as fit and proper representatives.

It is not out of place to mention in this connection that the same kind of objection which some religious persons make to taking part in political affairs, namely, that they would have to associate with irreligious men, or to become privy to deeds they could not approve, is made by some of these very persons, who assert that they will have nothing to do with Religion, because many of its professed supporters are hypocrites, or live lives inconsistent with their professions. Of course such an objection is no argument one way or the other, but it serves to illustrate one of my points, namely, that there is no more reason for denouncing Politics as something unholy, because some politicians are not saints, than for regarding Religion as a cloak to conceal wrongdoing because some of its professors discredit their professions. I think it more than likely that some of those who call themselves politicians, are quite as anxious to maintain a separation between Religion and Politics, as some of those who imagine that they best conform to their religious professions by taking neither part nor lot with those who, in one

way or other, are exercising the duties of Citizenship. They resent the intrusion, as they deem it, of matters which they consider have nothing to do with their particular pursuits. So far from weakening the arguments of those who counsel the very reverse of this view, such an objection only strengthens them. The separation of Religion and Politics has been good for neither. Religion suffers because it virtually admits that there is a sphere of ordinary life, in which its influence cannot be felt. Politics suffers because it is divorced from the restraining, ennobling, and inspiring influences of Religion. If, as I believe, Religion is that indefinable something, the possession of which makes a man a good man, and aids him to realise that there is something better than a mere animal existence, and that the conduct of life does not consist in a mere weighing of advantages and disadvantages, then surely it is the duty of religious men and women to infuse into all the concerns of life, be they domestic or commercial, social or political, the spirit of that religion which is to them, as individuals, an inspiration and a fulfilment of life.

But it may be said that the introduction of Religion into political life in no wise acts as a solution of difficulties; that, on the contrary, it adds to them, and tends to confound issues already sufficiently confused. That political questions are frequently extremely complicated cannot be denied. Considerations of expediency, as well as those of right and

wrong, are perpetually arising upon which it may be said Religion can throw little or no light. This may be granted; but, on the other hand, there is a tendency to exaggerate the sphere of expediency, or, as it is the fashion to call it, opportunism, and to exclude from the court of conscience many a transaction which, if brought there, would speedily be dismissed. In this corrective sense, so far from Religion confusing the issues, it would tend to clear them, not perhaps in the fashion which would satisfy those who are politicians and nothing else, but in a way which would redound to the credit and honour of all good citizens. If it be said that there is as much disputation in matters pertaining to Religion, as there is in Politics, and that it constantly happens that men, who are properly regarded as of strong religious convictions, are to be found on opposite sides in Politics, that still does not invalidate the general argument. It is hopeless, nay, it would be unwise, to wish for perfect unanimity in either religious or political affairs. But it is assuredly better that men should approach the consideration of all difficult and knotty questions affecting the lives and conduct of their fellow men in the spirit of Religion, than that they should exclude from their purview any of the considerations to which such a spirit would give rise.

In the great struggle in the United States, when the Southern States seceded from the Union, there were religious men in both the Federal and Confederate

ranks, who thought they were doing the will of God, and who, when success attended their own arms, saw in that success the special favour of the Almighty. It must have puzzled many a good honest soul in the midst of that terrible conflict, as it does even now, in far less serious matters of controversy, to see good men, belonging to the same church or to the same religious denomination, divided on questions which seem so clear. There has been found among the papers of Abraham Lincoln, and recently published,* a private meditation written by him at the time when the country was in the throes of its life and death struggle. His biographers say that it was not written to be seen of men, and perhaps for that very reason it is the more valuable. Said Lincoln: "The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both *may* be and one *must* be wrong. God cannot be *for* and *against* the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party, and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are the best adaptation to effect His purpose. I am almost ready to say that this is probably true, that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet. By His mere great power on the minds of the now contestants, He could have either *saved* or

**Abraham Lincoln, a History*, by Nicholay and Hay, 1890.

"*destroyed* the Union without a human contest ; yet "the contest began. And having begun, He could "give the final victory to either side any day. Yet "the contests proceeds." Lincoln's philosophy seems to me a truer one than that which would displace all religious considerations from political struggles, and leave them to be fought out in a spirit of atheistic bitterness.

I am not forgetful of the fact that in the name of Religion much is done in the political arena which deserves the reprobation of all right thinking men. The devilish notion that all is fair in love and war, which has its analogue in the principle, of which the Jesuits possess no monopoly, that the end justifies the means, is responsible for a great deal of the abominable tyranny which is exercised in the rural districts especially, and for the gross though petty corruption which is practised by persons who are members of churches, and would be highly scandalised were they classed as among the irreligious. Even the Sunday School has been made an instrument of oppression to working men and their families in the interests of a particular candidate. On the other hand, too, small congregations often allow their independence to be sapped, and help to spread the general corruption by the way in which they badger candidates and representatives for subscriptions to their churches or chapels. But while all this is done in the name of Religion, and Religion suffers from the fact, there is no Religion in it.

Although this is only an essay and not a treatise, it would be obviously incomplete were I to say nothing of the minister in his position as citizen. As a citizen he has the same privileges and, consequently, the same responsibility as any of his fellows. Does his position place upon him any larger responsibility? In one sense we have no more right to demand of him a stricter adherence to duty than of those to whom he ministers, but it is unquestionably a fact that by many persons he is regarded as specially set apart to live a good life, and that by those who altogether discard priestly notions. Infirmities of temper, or habits of conduct, which in ordinary mortals attract little or no attention, would call forth strong remarks if they were indulged in by the minister. It is true that he is in a measure selected for a high and holy office. Although we may utterly refuse to see in him a special servant of God, or to believe that by taking his ordination vows he becomes inspired with some divine message, we recognise that by training and inclination he has been drawn to the consideration of subjects with which many of us can have but a casual acquaintance; that he is a teacher of Religion, and that questions of Ethics present themselves to him in a clearer light, perhaps, than they do to those whose personal interests are calculated to lead them astray. Without looking upon every occupant of our pulpits as clothed with the prophet's robe, we yet are justified in expecting from such of them as have had some experience of life—and no

others ought to be set up as teachers of men—some light in the problems that beset us, when dealing with questions of conduct. Such questions are perpetually coming before us in our capacity as citizens, and there is no more reason why a minister should preserve silence on such topics than on any other which affects the moral and social well-being of the people. That a minister may abuse his position is, of course, quite possible, but such a possibility ought not to justify a positive prohibition of all reference to subjects in which we as citizens are or ought to be interested. And if we permit the minister to speak as his conscience and his judgment dictate, we have no right to withdraw that permission if, and when, the matter has reached an acute stage of controversy, or because what he has to say may offend some wealthy church member. There is no sense, for instance, in allowing a minister to denounce the evils of gambling, and then to muzzle him because some particular measure for suppressing them is under the consideration of Parliament, and is regarded by one of the parties in the State either as wholly inadequate, or as likely to lead to mischievous results. To permit a minister to state his conviction of the need of religious education for the young, and then to forbid him to open his mouth on the subject during the period when an election for the local School Board is pending, lest his utterances may be supposed to be made in the interests of one particular party or candidate, savours

of the ridiculous. To forbid him to denounce the evils of intemperance, because he may make one of his congregation who is interested in the liquor traffic uncomfortable or displeased, is as bad as stoning the prophets.

In an ordination charge, Channing said, "Preach with moral courage. Fear no man, high or low, rich or poor, taught or untaught. Honour all men; love all men; but fear none. . . . Do not wink at wrong deeds or unholy prejudices, because sheltered by custom or respected names. . . . Never shrink from speaking your mind, through dread of reproach. Wait not to be backed by numbers. . . . Courage, even on the side of error, is power. How powerful must it prove on the side of truth! A minister speaking not from selfish calculation but giving out his mind in godly sincerity, uttering his convictions in natural tones, and always faithful to the light which he has received, however he may give occasional offence, will not speak in vain; he will have an ally in the moral sense, the principle of justice, the reverence for virtue, which is never wholly extinguished in the human soul." * Theodore Parker, too, has enforced much the same moral when he says that "the minister must have an eye to correct and guide the politicians. He must warn men to keep laws that are just, warn them to

* See the whole passage in "Charge at the Ordination of the Rev. J. S. Dwight," 1840.—Channing's Collected Works.

“break laws that are wicked; and as they reverence
“the dear God, never to bow before an idol of
“statesmen or the State.”* Both these utterances
may be commended to the careful consideration of
those who would narrow the position of the minister
to that of a mere writer of essays on safe subjects.

I know that it is said by some that they have
enough of such matters during the week, that they
read about them in the daily papers, and on Sunday
they crave to have their mind withdrawn from the
strife and turmoil of the other six days. I cannot
help thinking that in this there is a good deal of
insincerity. It is not so much that men wish to
shun such topics as to avoid having to consider
them in the light of Religion and Ethics, in which
light alone the minister should deal with them.
They ask for a sort of moral anæsthetic in the
shape of sermons on subjects which have no real
concern with their lives, and shrink from those
which may act as a tonic or an inspiration of con-
duct. Sufficient attention has not been given by
ministers to this subject of Citizenship and its con-
nection with religious life. They have too often
preferred to speak about matters which, after all,
must be speculative in their nature, and to neglect
those which have a real vital interest for living men and
women. Faith in God and faith in man are great and

* “The Position and Duty of a Minister,” a sermon preached
before the 28th Congregational Society of Boston, 21st Nov.,
1852.

inspiring motives in conduct, but "faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone." Conduct or character is of far greater importance than creed, and it is in the daily concerns of life, and the way in which our relations to one another are maintained, that characters are formed. It is essentially the work of a religious ministry to insist on this, not in vague and indefinite terms only, but in such a way as to have a special application to the particular circumstances of those who are to be ministered unto. It should, too, be regarded as part of the curriculum of education, and in this connection I mean religious education, to prepare the young, explicitly, to exercise in a religious spirit the duties of Citizenship which in process of time they will have to discharge. To decide between right and wrong cannot be too early taught, and it is to this moral touchstone that so many of the matters which come before us as citizens must be brought.

A word or two must be said upon the question whether a minister ought to take part in the more active of these duties, such as becoming a member of some of those local bodies which administer the law, or even of that body which in effect makes the law. Upon this it is impossible to dogmatise. It is not so much the nature of the work as the extent of it, and, it must be added, the fitness of the particular man for the special work, which have to be considered. There is nothing in the fact that a man is devoted to work in a special sphere that shuts him out of active work as a citizen. So long as those who

have a first call on his time and energy do not suffer, there is no reason why a minister should not render as good service to his fellows as any other citizen.

It has been already stated that a citizen's duty does not begin or end at the ballot-box. That would, indeed, be a narrow conception of Citizenship, though, as has been pointed out, it is a very important way of discharging such duty. There are scores of men, and women too, who from various causes are debarred from exercising the privilege of the voter, who yet can and do set an example of noble and exalted Citizenship. A large part of the business of the nation is carried on by purely voluntary methods. No obligation, save that of a sense of duty, compels hundreds of men and women to undertake labours, which, if not so undertaken, would be relegated to the care of the State. No doubt it has been found, as in the case of Elementary Education, that this work, valuable as it has been, has from no fault of those engaged in it, proved inadequate; and the State has been compelled to step in and supplement or even supplant these voluntary efforts; but it would be a bad day for England were all voluntary work to give way to government or State action. Thanks, however, to the endeavours of many a man and woman who have no desire to live to themselves alone, much is being done for the happiness, the well-being, the culture, the health of all classes of citizens. Our Hospitals, our Open Spaces, our Libraries, Art Galleries, and Museums, our Sanitariums, and our Colleges are

monuments of this public spirit, and enlightened Citizenship; while the thousand and one societies for relieving distress, helping the sick and aged poor, promoting study, aiding the weak, protecting the helpless, and promoting the divine spirit of charity, all attest the attempts of the citizens of this country to discharge some of their responsibilities.

It is sufficient to draw a line between the duties of Citizenship and those which pertain to us as members of society; and if it should be urged, as with some reason it may, that in what has just been written no attempt has been made to draw such a line, I reply that there is no particular need for doing so. It is by no means easy, nor is it desirable, to separate a man's actions, so as to say that he does this as an individual, that as a citizen, and the other thing simply as a member of society. Citizenship involves social action of some kind, and there is in much of what goes by the name of Socialism, a good deal that is included in the duties of Citizenship. But whether it be the one or the other, it is to Religion we must look as an elevating, a purifying, and inspiring element. Without that, Citizenship loses its high position, and becomes a mere machine for making and administering law. With it we may hope for an improved and regenerated society, a body of citizens filled with a sense of duty, which shall be almost unconscious, a nation which shall realise the dream of the writer of old in that righteousness exalteth it. Religion, if it be of any

value at all, must exalt, purify, and ennoble. But it can only do that by its spirit being allowed to affect all the interests of life. Some of our noblest citizens have been men and women filled through and through with that spirit. Is it a dream to hope that the time will come when all our citizens will be possessed of that spirit, and that all their duties will be discharged in the manner which such a possession demands? It may be long before such a condition of things is realised, but it is not too soon to urge that all who hope for the good time coming should themselves labour to speed the day when it shall appear.

VI.

RELIGION AND AMUSEMENTS.

BY J. E. MANNING, M.A.

WHAT relation does Religion bear to our Amusements? Let us reply by another question. What relation does Religion bear to any other interest of life? What to our daily occupations? our business? our social intercourse? our conduct in the world? Religion is concerned, or ought to be concerned, in all these things, its special function as applied to them being to purify, ennoble, and restrain; to help us to do our duties faithfully; to make our work the fitting result of earnest labour seriously bestowed; to render social life pure. Religion is like the leaven. It penetrates life through and through, making wholesome the mass. God intended it not merely for the Sunday, to keep us devout on one day in the week only. It is to go with us into the work of the other six also, to consecrate all that we do, permeating the whole of life and making it good, right, and clean. Religion ought, therefore, to touch our recreations and amusements also, rendering them innocent and

helpful, as well as enjoyable, and so enable us to go back to our work refreshed and strengthened.

Recreation is re-creation, and Amusement is, etymologically, the halt which a dog makes in the chase—a pause to sniff the air, in order to see which way the scent lies. That done, he starts off again with redoubled speed. Hence both words, recreation and amusement, contain in themselves a guide to the understanding of the place they should occupy in our lives. They are for the refreshing of our strength; for a pause in the serious work of life, in order that we may gather our faculties together for fresh effort. Now, Religion has nothing to say against Amusements which fulfil this object. Religion sanctions a Sabbath—a rest from labour. It sanctions all recreations and amusements which make this rest efficacious, a real rest for mind or body. But it has only condemnation for the abuse of Amusements, when they lead to vicious and depraved habits, and to recreations which involve any moral blemish. That Puritanic spirit which condemns all Amusements indiscriminately is false. God made us capable of enjoying ourselves, just as He made us able to think, and talk, and labour with our hands. The child can play before it can do any one of these things. Experience proves how natural enjoyment is to us. We do our work the better for it; we are more cheerful for it; we do the drudgery of life more contentedly for our intervals of pleasure. Children flag if they are not allowed time for play.

Better work is done in a school in which a break in the routine is regularly permitted for games in the open air, than in one where the pupils work on through the whole morning in an increasingly vitiated atmosphere. A romp in the fresh air is a more effectual stimulant than the cane. So also, we children of older growth need "times of refreshing" in the routine of daily business, moments when we can throw off the load of care, hours of relaxation when we can drink in the sunlight, and enjoy pleasant converse with our friends.

We should be overwhelmed by the monotony and seriousness of life but for its intervals of pleasure. God has tempered our capacities together in such a way as to produce, by their harmonious working, the best results, and the capacity for Amusement would not have been given us if it were not intended to serve a useful purpose. The world will have recreations and amusements, whatever Puritanic asceticism may say to the contrary, and it is right that it should have them. Abuses arise, it is true, and some amusements Religion cannot sanction. But abuses also arise in business—fraud, dishonesty, sharp practice; and Religion cannot sanction these, though it has nothing to say against business legitimately conducted. Religion will help us to discover in both cases what is lawful and what is not; what business we may follow without contamination, and, on the other hand, what amusements we may indulge in innocently, and what we must avoid.

Let us take a few examples. Card-playing is in itself innocent enough. Though many excellent people condemn it as sinful, I have never yet been able to see the smallest harm in a quiet rubber of whist. It is certainly a great boon to the aged, when the eyes are failing, and reading is no longer a possible resource for a dull evening. For both old and young it is an intellectual game, and it affords that amount of play for the mind which gives it rest from more serious thoughts and pressing cares. But it may be abused like everything else. You may make it a means of cheating, gambling, swindling. But that is your fault. The fault does not lie in the game. Deception is not inherent in the cards. If you like to abuse them, it is hardly fair for you to turn round upon them and accuse them of being your ruin, when your own stupidity and folly have brought you disgrace and loss. Treat them properly, and they will do you no harm. And, in order to avoid even the possibility of their doing harm, never, under any circumstances, play for money points. I would impress this forcibly upon our young men. Let nothing ever induce you to play for a money stake, however small. Let your friends sneer at you, or laugh at you, if they will; but do not let that shake your determination. It is the money stakes that do the mischief. It is here the abuse comes in. A man might go on playing all his life long and suffer not the smallest moral blemish; he might get much innocent amusement and pleasure out of cards, and not a breath of slander

tarnish his name. But let him begin to play for money, and from that moment the danger signal is hoisted. He may escape unhurt. Thousands do. But he may *not*; and it is the wisest and most prudent thing, to say the least, to avoid the possibility.

It is, moreover, the most moral thing to avoid temptation. Will anybody deny that it is the money element in card-playing that leads to swindling at cards? to scandals that ruin men for life and bring them under the ban of social ostracism, if not within the clutches of the law? Will anybody deny that it is the money element which brings all the evil that results from betting and gambling—the misery, ruin, destruction of character, destruction of home and family life, they often involve? As soon as money becomes the object of card-playing, the play degenerates to the same level as betting and gambling. These are in themselves fundamentally immoral. The winner gains what he has not worked for, and impoverishes the loser of what hard work has won. These are always associated with cheating, lying, fraud; often with despair and suicide. These are a gangrene in our social life, and are spreading their poison far and wide. The law ought to take them more strenuously in hand. Whether the culprit be my lord or my lord's stable boy, whether he be a prince of the blood or a costermonger, he ought to be punished with the impartial severity of the law.

Betting and gambling are a curse in this land, second only to drink. The vice has made its way

even into our schools, and is regarded by the boys as a proper and manly thing to indulge in. A lucrative trade is carried on among them by gambling agents, who send advertisements offering them money on easy terms, by which they may risk the chances of some forthcoming race; and the victims are the more easily duped by the assurance that their parents will make up all losses. Nor is the vice less pernicious among the young outside the school. The boys in the street risk their small pence on the result of this race or that football match; and, losing, appropriate money that does not belong to them; or, winning, spend it on things they are better without; and under any circumstances lose the honest, candid, wholesome character a decent lad ought to have. How inveterate is this vice in the middle and wealthy classes, and among what is called the aristocracy (though there is only one aristocracy—"supremacy of the best," the aristocracy of the wise, the noble, the good); how inveterate this vice is in these classes, ordinary people who try to do their best, and live on what their own honest industry brings them, only know by the disgraceful revelations which from time to time fill the newspapers, and disclose the rottenness that underlies the smooth surface of *refined* society. Ruin, degradation, despair, insanity, suicide, these are the things that hover, like evil spirits, around the fool who has learned to bet and gamble, treachery, fraud, lying, trickery. low-cun-

ning, are the best qualifications of the knave, who makes it his trade.

Betting and gambling, and almost every other kind of vice, find a natural home in the racecourse, as vermin breed in a barn. What a mass of iniquity is represented in the words "the turf." Immoral men and women of no character gather at races as if by natural instinct. It is a gay and pretty scene, a race; innocent enough at the first glance; the busy field, the handsome dresses, the smart equipages, the happy faces, the ceaseless movement, and the mingled voices of the crowd, combining in one bright picture pleasant to look upon. The very horses seem to enter with animation into the spirit of the hour. But a closer view dispels the illusion. Here are card-sharpers and blacklegs; men with blackguard plainly written in their faces, vice in every feature, who flavour the air as they pass with mingled gin and tobacco. Here are men who come to swindle, and women who come to allure. Here is the thieving tout and swindling tipster; the professional backer, the heavy betting owner, the sporting publican, the liar, the gambler, the broken down "betting man," who, at the first glance, proclaims himself, from the sole of his patched-up shoe to the crown of his rakish hat, to be precisely what he is—an unprincipled rascal. Hither comes the city clerk, the shop-boy, the shop-keeper, to risk his small savings, or, worse still, the money he has borrowed for the occasion, on the chance that some

favourite horse may win. If the race were between the *horses*, he might, perhaps, see his expectations realised. But there is a jockey astride each horse, and the result is doubtful! Hither also comes the merchant, the manufacturer, the book-keeper, to try his luck in the risky business of book-making. Hither come the idle, the frivolous, the vain, the needy, the scum from all classes of society, to see and be seen, to bet and swagger—a noisy, demoralized, and, later in the day, a tipsy, blasphemous crowd.

Little good ever comes from “the turf.” It ruins thousands. It encourages the worst forms of vice. It demoralizes the district in which races are carried on. In some places even churches benefit by the “gate money”! There are, of course, always apologists in abundance, ready to demonstrate that the good arising from races outweighs the evil; that the district is really benefited rather than injured by them; that during the race week trade is brisk, money is circulated; and I suppose it must be acknowledged that the old plea that racing improves the breed of horses still holds good, though it occupies, perhaps, a very minor place in the estimation of the patrons of “the turf.” The “ring” are more interested in the betting than in the breeding. It is, however, a legitimate plea, and it stands upon good authority, that in England breeders have, by sedulous attention, brought horses to the highest state of perfection of which their nature is capable,

the horses of Great Britain being held in high estimation in all parts of the civilised world.*

It is satisfactory, also, to be assured on good authority that "the generosity of the ring, individual and collective, is proverbial. If a jockey gets a fall either on the flat or over a country, or is incapacitated by other illness from pursuing his calling; if a trainer dies suddenly, leaving a wife and children unprovided for; in fact, if misfortune in any way overtakes men whose living depends upon turf pursuits, a subscription is forthwith started and nobly responded to in the ring, and, when the object of their charity is beyond the reach of human aid, they club purses and bury him decently."† In the midst of the noise, profanity, swindling, and low blackguardism of the Turf, it is pleasant to know that human nature is not wholly spoiled. But the good arising thence is small, indeed, compared with the immense mass of moral evil. The sport, moreover, has degenerated into a trade, in which the practised hand has opportunities, which it is not slow to use, of taking unfair advantage, to the detriment of the inexperienced and the unwary. The Turf appears to exercise an unaccountable fascination. Its dupes return to it again and again,

* With the object of improving the breed of camels to aid him in the anti-slavery crusade in which he is engaged, Cardinal Lavigerie has established camel races in Algeria, and has founded an annual prize of sixty pounds for competition.

† Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire. "Racing." Badminton Library.

like moths to a candle. Victimised to-day, they return with fresh hope to-morrow. Deceived and deceiver alike are drawn to the Turf by an irresistible attraction.

Religion has nothing to say against racing as racing. There is nothing intrinsically cruel in it, as there is in coursing and pigeon-shooting; nor is it more injurious to life and limb than hunting. No moral law is necessarily infringed by a trial of speed between well-trained horses. It is the knavery connected with it that renders racing morally injurious, the betting and gambling that have become the sole interest to the thousands who flock to the course. Let every man who wishes to preserve an honest name and a decent life beware lest he enter into temptation here; and let the young resolve, once for all, to have nothing whatever to do with "the turf." The Book of Proverbs has in it much sound advice, but it contains few things better than this—whoever wrote it, it is as good now as it was then. "My son attend to my words, incline thine ear to my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes. Keep them in the midst of thine heart. *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not into the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away.*"

I think I have made clear what is the right attitude of Religion towards that part of our life which is not concerned wholly with the serious work of our daily occupation. It ought to purify, cleanse, and elevate. It holds the same relation to our amusements that it

holds to our business. It ought to exercise a restraining, yet energising, power.

Some have thought that Religion ought to frown down *all* Amusements as pernicious and morally objectionable. The Puritans, in the time of the Stuarts, set their faces sternly against games and recreation of every kind. It is true the looseness and dissoluteness in certain quarters gave some colour to their objections, and certainly the Puritan abhorrence of the unbridled gaiety of the age, with its selfishness and sensuality, had something noble in it. But they carried it too far. They frowned down all public amusements, "from masques which "were exhibited at the mansions of the great down "to the wrestling matches and grinning matches on "the village green."* It was a sin to deck a May-pole. Dancing and bell ringing were sternly prohibited. Bowls, rope-dancing and horse-racing were all condemned as ungodly and lewd. Puppet-shows, so popular all over England, were regarded with no favour by the Puritans; they were almost as bad as theatrical entertainments. Bear-baiting on Sunday was "damnable profanation." The bears were shot not because the sport was cruel to them; the "Saints" were not much troubled with feelings such as now animate the Society for the prevention of cruelty to animals; the bears were destroyed because they afforded amusement

* Macaulay.

to the people by their antics. Their owners were treated as rogues and vagabonds. The Long Parliament gave orders that Christmas Day should be observed no longer as a time of mirth, but as a fast, "and that all men should pass it humbly "bemoaning the great national sin which they and "their fathers had so often committed on that day "by romping under the mistletoe, eating boar's "head, and drinking ale flavoured with roasted "apples." The theatres were the object of the most violent denunciation. In 1647 an act was passed enacting "that all stage players, and players of "interludes, and common plays, are, and shall be, "taken for rogues." A fine of five shillings was imposed on all spectators; all money taken at the door was confiscated; players caught in the act were to be whipped at the cart's tail. Caught a second time, they were to be "dealt with as incorrigible rogues ought to be."

In the austerity of the Puritans we see, on a large scale, the injurious effect of too great zeal on the part of religious fanaticism to suppress all amusement, as if it were, in itself, a sin. What was the result of Puritanic tyranny in this matter? Angry murmurs of discontent were heard on all sides. The smouldering resentment of the people against the suppression of Christmas Day festivities broke out on more than one occasion in formidable riots. Games and merrymakings, no longer openly permitted, were indulged in secretly, without the con-

trolling sense of decency which publicity tends to secure. At the Restoration the disastrous folly of the forced austerity of the nation became manifest in such a way that the lesson will not easily be forgotten. It was as if the pent-up sewage of a mud-volcano had been suddenly let loose. The Court set the example of vice, and the people were not slow to follow. A period of wild and desperate dissoluteness was the result. Society was rotten to the core. Public life was debased ; private life corrupt. The terrible state of things is reflected in the drama of the period,—in the plays of Wycherly, Congreve, and others. The unclean spirit forcibly driven out by the Puritans, had returned with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and the last state of Stuart-England was worse than the first.

We have here, then, an illustration on a large scale of the mistake Religion makes, in frowning down all Amusements as sinful. The theatre is not necessarily immoral. But it may be abused, and so become immoral. It was abused at the Restoration. It was the teacher and encourager of vice. Authors wrote plays, and the public applauded them, in which a systematic attempt was made to show that vice was the proper qualification of all who aspired to be regarded as fine ladies and gentlemen ; to show that virtue was mawkish, modesty stupid, innocence ridiculous ; that sensuality and low morals, provided they were combined with sufficient impudence and dash, were the sure road to honour and promotion.

And yet the drama, thus degraded, thus used as the hand-maid of vice, had its origin, in England at least, in religious representations not unlike, though on a humbler scale, the passion-play at Oberammergau to-day. The Church was the first patron in England of the Drama, making use of it to illustrate scripture scenes, and so bring them vividly before the minds of the people.

There is no inherent impropriety in dramatic representations that should render the theatre always and inevitably immoral. On the contrary, the theatre properly used, may become a powerful moral teacher. It may be effectual in conveying lessons through its vivid delineation of character and motive, which the pulpit is quite unable to convey, inasmuch as it may impress minds over which the pulpit has no power. Powerful acting seizes upon the least impressionable, and lessons conveyed when the emotions are keenly roused will last. Good plays, well acted, cannot fail to do much good. There has been a marked improvement of late years in the character of the plays put upon the stage, and the high moral reputation of the leading actors of our day has gone far to elevate the tone of dramatic representations. This is as it should be, but more remains to be done. Let the censorship of the drama be still more rigidly exercised, and let no plays but those which enforce a good moral lesson be permitted on the boards. This need not prove too serious a burden on the discriminating judgment of the Lord

Chamberlain, and it need not detract from any dramatic interest in the play itself. It does not necessitate the production of poor plays, emasculated of vigour, or devoid of real humour. It only necessitates the clear presentation of a sound moral lesson, the supremacy of right, and the priceless value of virtue. No false sentiment is needed to make duty plain; vulgarity is not absolutely indispensable to secure the interest of an audience; indecency never yet tended to make a fine dramatic situation more powerful.

There have been faults in this matter in the past, on both sides of the curtain. Authors, managers, and actors alike, have felt that they must pander to the low tastes of their audience, always taking it for granted that the taste of their audience *is* low, and instead of trying what could be done by putting really good plays upon the stage, they have pandered to a want which they have, in part, created. Why not give the public credit for better taste? It has been found possible, in the present day, to supply really good and decent plays, and to make them pay equally well with, if not better than, the vile stuff that was once thought to be the proper thing to satisfy prurient ears. But the fault has been also on the side of that part of the public whose taste is somewhat better than they have been credited with. Many have said, "We shall see indecency paraded before us," and have, therefore, refrained from going to the theatre, thus depriving themselves of one source of

genuine recreation. Whereas, had they shown themselves ready to give their support to good dramas, and made it clear that they would not tolerate bad ones, a mutual understanding would have arisen between the managers and the public, so that the theatre might have become a source of true pleasure and of amusement, to which no moral blemish was attached. A well-conducted theatre ought to be a means not only of affording real enjoyment to the community, but it ought to be also a means of educating its taste, improving its tone, elevating its ideals, by interpreting to it the thoughts of the master-minds of dramatic literature. So long as it does this—and this, surely, is its proper function—Religion has nothing to say against the theatre. But the theatre has only too often been made to minister to the lowest instincts of the mob, to the passions of the vulgar among both rich and poor. Religion protests against this degradation of the theatre, as an abuse of its proper function. It protests against the abuse of the theatre as against the abuse of everything else.

There is another place of amusement even more popular in the present day than the theatre—the Music Hall. There is a large class of people to whom the sentimental clap-trap, the rollicking fun, the clever impersonations, the wonderful acrobatic feats, the jokes, the puns, the lively buffconery of the Music Hall are a source of nightly enjoyment ; and provided there was nothing worse in the Music Hall than this, it would not be productive of much

harm. The tone of the Music Hall is vulgar, no doubt, but there are all sorts of people in this world, with all sorts of tastes, and vulgarity is the common property of people in every class, and hence the Music Hall is patronised by people in every class. Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, who has made "Music Hall Land" the subject of his special exploration, and speaks with the authority of complete experience, finds the chief defect in this popular place of amusement to be its "unreality, everything seeming to 'be what it is not, with false names, false sentiment, 'false metaphors, false pretensions," and he speaks of the extraordinary attraction of "these glittering 'halls and their air of spurious magnificence" to the crowd of apprentices, clerks, shop-boys who congregate in them, speculating at the same time whence the money is derived to pay for the expense of visiting these places of amusement night after night.

But the worst part of the Music Hall is not its unreality, nor is it its vulgarity. When the question arises, shall its licence be renewed, the consideration of first importance is whether the place is not conducive to public immorality. So close do the managers of even the best-regulated Music Halls sail to the wind, that it is not easy to determine where a strictly legal offence comes in. Captain Costigan is not always openly and grossly immoral. When it suits his purpose he can "hide his grossness with fair ornament"; and when he

likes he can convey more than he says by leers and grimaces. When any opposition is raised to the renewal of the license there are always plenty of witnesses to prove that the performances are as innocent as a sacred concert. But there is no doubt that Music Halls are the rendezvous of immodest people of both sexes, and the inducement the sale of intoxicating liquors offers to intemperance, is a permanent evil which requires more stringent legislation than has hitherto been in force. The managers of most Music Halls know that unless plenty of drink is consumed the place would not pay; "and it is there," says one who knows,* "that many a career is begun which spoils our youths, not only as citizens, but as men. They begin to be the victims of that fatal craze for drink which soon clutches at their hearts as with a hand of fire, and drags them down hopelessly to perdition. And when so many of the audience are young, and when they have inflamed their passions to madness by intoxicating drinks, they are naturally ripe for indecency. It is then that they reward the coarse jest, the indecent innuendo, the wicked hint, the foul gesture, with their loudest applause, and their most idiotic laughter." Here, surely, is a serious evil, which calls for more stringent measures on the part of the legislature. While Music Halls are so numerous and so popular,

* "Vox Clamantis" in an excellent series of pamphlets on Public Morality.

they are a permanent source of danger to the sobriety and morals of the community. How injurious their influence upon young men and young women who acquire a taste for low amusements, and form associations of a vicious kind, almost before they know what the serious work of life is, must be clear to all. The old hardened and soddened habitués of such places are probably past redemption, but it is sad to think that so many thousands of bright young souls, capable of better things, should be brought by steady declension, caused by constant association with these places through the early years of manhood and womanhood, to the same low level. It is the abuse of Music Halls, as of theatres, that makes them a source of harm, the surroundings of the place, the evil associations connected with it. When there is a bar or taproom close at hand, and when it is regarded as the proper and necessary thing to indulge in drink for the good of the place, there intemperance, and the fatal consequences of intemperance, are sure to be found.

Religion has nothing to say against the Music Hall, so far as it is free from moral contamination. There is no special harm in the music, though it is poor; or in the majority of songs, though they are not refined poetry; or in the jokes, though stale; or in the dramatic sketches which, according to Mr. Fitzgerald, "though intentionally serious, are exquisitely mirth-moving. . . . Human affection, a father's love for his offspring, a husband's for his

“wife, valour against overwhelming odds, rescue of females, such are the emotions here compressed into a quarter of an hour or so, and exhibited in their elemental simplicity Good, wholesome, moral sentiment, such as a man boasting that he never *could* see a female in distress or suffering, so far from being received with a laugh, is boisterously applauded, touches every heart.” All this is suitable to the tastes and the wants of the audience, and, so far from there being any harm in it, it affords them amusement, and, possibly, exercises a softening influence over lives that know little enough of tenderness and chivalry. But Religion has nothing but condemnation for the abuses of the Music Hall, the drunkenness, profanity, immorality connected with it. It is the duty of our magistrates to see that these places of amusement are kept free from corrupting influences. Much more might be done than has been done hitherto in this direction. Licenses ought not to be granted with such complacent facility. The press ought to utter a more unequivocal voice in the matter. The pulpit ought to be clear and explicit. The Music Hall occupies a large part of the time and attention of a large class of the community. The pulpit has no right to ignore it. It might, possibly, be the best thing for society at large if the Music Hall were abolished utterly, as it might, perhaps, be the best thing for the country if the race-course were abolished. But here the thing is, in our midst; its

attractive influence on vast numbers of the population, who visit it in crowds, cannot be ignored.

The pulpit would do well to combine its forces with those of the law in trying to purify, and cleanse what it cannot abolish, thus attempting, at least, to eradicate the evil from the Music Hall, so that it may no longer be a source of contamination, but a place of recreation and innocent amusement, such as it ought to be. The pulpit can never do this by ignoring the subject altogether as vulgar. One source of the weakness of the pulpit is its blindness. Much might be done by the creation of rival attractions by the churches, the institution of concerts, congregational "at homes," musical and other societies, for the benefit of the young people; and, happily, in the present day much *is* done in this direction. But let the pulpit show that it is alive to the danger. Let it speak, not in tones of pious horror, the feeble senility into which it is too prone to fall; but let it make an effort to create strong and sound public opinion on this as on all other matters connected with the amusements and recreations of the people. When the managers of Music Halls, as of theatres, learn that the voice of the people is against them, there will soon be a change for the better in the conduct of their houses.

There are few amusements and recreations that are not in themselves essentially innocent. It is the abuse of them that must be checked. Outdoor games strengthen the physical frame; make us

healthy, strong, vigorous, ready for work. But they may be abused, and here Religion works hand in hand with hygiene. A wise hygiene declares what athletic exercises are good, what injurious, what are to be encouraged, what to be avoided. It discourages all exercises too violent for the welfare of the body; it sanctions all such as are beneficial. Has Religion nothing to do with this body, so "fearfully and wonderfully made"? The man who corrupts his body is as great a sinner as the man who corrupts his soul. Religion here is moral hygiene, and Religion sanctions all athletic exercises which promote the welfare of the body, and condemns all which tend to injure it. It condemns everything that is immoral connected with sports of every kind; the betting in connection with football matches, boat races, foot races, cycling; the cruelties connected with coursing, pigeon shooting, and the like. It seems as if the curse of betting and gambling must follow our sports everywhere, for in the present day the old manliness associated with them is altogether overshadowed by the chance they afford for gambling. What "sport" is there in pigeon shooting? No sport is more unmanly. What chance has the poor bird when it flies, after being cooped up in a little box, dazed with rough handling, against the "sportsman," who stands at so convenient a distance, and with so much small shot, to scatter, that he can hardly miss if he tries? It is a cruel, brutal, and brutalising sport. But then

the "sport" enters as only a minor detail into the pigeon shooter's calculations. It is the gambling element in it that gives the practice its chief fascination.

What is the attitude of Religion towards indoor games? It approves them so long as they are innocent; it condemns their abuse. They afford relaxation for the mind, and are a pleasant mode of filling up leisure time. Dancing is a healthful and wholesome recreation. It trains the limbs to grace and agility. Billiard-playing in the home is harmless; it trains the eye and the hand. It is pure recreation, affording to a man engrossed with business a perfect rest, a complete change of interest. But both dancing and billiard-playing may be abused. Dancing may be associated with vulgarity and evil-companionship; billiard-playing with drinking, low society, and gambling. Then they become harmful. Religion does not protest against them in themselves, but against the abuses to which they are liable; against the evils which are incidental, but not necessarily identical, with them. There is no inherent vice in amateur theatricals or in novel-reading. The former is a delightful way of occupying spare time. It trains the memory, it quickens the perceptions, it gives an introduction to dramatic literature to persons who would otherwise take little interest in it. Above all, it creates cheerfulness and merriment; it gives an evening's pleasant enjoyment to the whole

family circle. But it may be abused. Too much time may be devoted to it, time that ought to be devoted to more important matters. I have heard an employer say he has had to dismiss his clerks more than once because of their incapacity for work owing to football matches, cricket matches, and "sports" generally. The day after the "fête" they were so completely wearied out that they were unequal to the duties he paid them to do. The same thing might occur from an incessant round of balls, concerts, parties; and amateur theatricals are open to the same abuse. Within proper limits, and under due restriction as to choice of plays, amateur theatricals may be a delightful and useful recreation. Abused, they become hurtful, and against the abuse Religion and common sense alike set their face.

In the same way novel reading may be abused, both by the excessive time devoted to it, and by the choice of poor and enfeebling stories. There are some who devour novels with wholly indiscriminate taste. Anything in the shape of a novel is food for them. No sooner is one consumed, than another is taken up. That, too, is hastily read, and thrown aside for another. A hundred different novels produce practically the same impression on the mind; that one person was tenderly loved by another person; that seemingly endless difficulties stood in the way of their union. But they were united at last, and Heaven and Earth applauded

the achievement. This, for the hundredth or the thousandth time, the slight variation in the road by which the end is reached forming the only excitement. And so the one thousand and first novel is taken up, the result being, as Thoreau says, "dulness of sight, a stagnation of the vital circulations, and a general deliquium and sloughing off of all the intellectual faculties." I need hardly speak of the common danger of another kind, only too often incurred from excessive novel-reading—namely, the adoption of false ideals, false sentiments, mistaken conceptions of duty, and a totally false estimate of life, until the young reader seems to be living in an entirely fictitious world, where nothing is real, and where there is no solid ground to walk upon. But all this is the abuse of novel-reading. A good novel is excellent recreation—food for thought and for the imagination. In its delineation of character and in the development of the plot it is a work of art. The mind is stirred by it, the emotions are roused; for the time being we become actors in the story. It is a transcript of life. We rise from its perusal not merely amused, not merely refreshed, but strengthened also, and, it may be, with clearer perceptions of duty, and with more exalted aims. Religion has no condemnation for good novels; but to the bad novel, the vicious novel, and to the reading of such novels, Religion is as hostile as good taste and right feeling ought to be.

Hence Religion holds to out-door recreations and to in-door amusements the same relation that it holds to every other concern of life. While they are innocent it gives its approval, and when they are indulged in at proper times and in proper places. But abuses of them it cannot sanction. Lawn tennis, for example, is an excellent game; but lawn tennis ostentatiously played on Sunday, as a protest against those who prefer to observe Sunday as a quiet day of rest, is quite out of season. When the player parades himself in the road in his flannels when decent people are on their way to church, in order to demonstrate his manly independence, he becomes offensive. Of course, the game is not to blame; it is the player.

This leads me to the consideration of Sunday recreation, and of the question so much debated at the present time of the opening of Museums, Libraries, and Picture Galleries on Sundays. The book, or rather the "Declaration of Sports" issued by James I., permitted games of various kinds on Sunday, with the proviso that "the same may be had in due and convenient time, without impediment or neglect of divine service." The Puritans strenuously resisted the permission thus granted, regarding it as a profanation of the "Sabbath." Their efforts were so far successful that in 1636 we find Robert Dover, the patron of the Cotswold games, complaining that restriction on the amusements of the people had

driven them to far worse methods of spending their time. He says :—

Whereby I see, instead of active things,
What harm the same unto our nation brings ;
The pipe and pot are made the only prize
Which all our spritful youth do exercise.

What do we find in the present day ? The public house is closed during hours of divine service, and open for the refreshment of such as are exhausted after their religious “exercises.” For those who do not go to church the public house or the street is the only place of resort to while away the idle hours.

It is the duty of the nation or of local communities to see that the leisure of Sunday is not abused and made the opportunity of vicious indulgence. If the Sunday Closing Act becomes universal, it will become imperative that something shall be done to supply fitting recreation for the people. It is idle to suppose that the universal closing of the public house will drive into the churches those who abstain from going now ; and if you take away the one great resource of the Sunday, you must provide some other means of attraction. In the meantime, while the public house is still open on Sunday, it is no less the duty of the community to supply counter attractions to its evil influences. Hence, under any conditions of the Sunday Acts, something ought to be done for the recreation and edification of the people on their day of rest. Whatever can be done in this direction in the way of “pleasant Sunday afternoons for the “people,” free concerts, where good music is given,

with short addresses or lectures of a simple kind, ought to be done. Our Picture Galleries, Museums, and Public Libraries ought to be used to their fullest extent. It is a pitiable argument that people who now throng the public houses on Sundays do not care for pictures, or curiosities or books. What we want to do is to teach them to care for such things ; to induce them to go where they are, and so educate them up to something better than muddling their brains over the " pipe and pot." Let these places be made attractive by the appointment of persons properly qualified to explain the various objects of interest, and talk with the people in a sympathetic and friendly way. Surely, in every large community a sufficient number of volunteers properly qualified for the work could, if necessary, be found, who would be willing to give, say, one Sunday in ten during the year to this work. By proper arrangement among themselves, that is the utmost it need involve. If this were done, I have no doubt whatever that we should see these places filled every Sunday with a quiet and orderly crowd. It need not involve any serious extra cost to the ratepayers, and the cost, whatever it might be, would be amply justified by the good that would result from the outlay. Moreover, as it is, thousands who now contribute to the maintenance of those public institutions do not get their fair advantage out of them, for they are closed on the only day when it is possible for them to visit them.

In places where the Museums, Libraries, and Picture Galleries are thrown open on Sundays, the universal experience is that the people are ready enough to take advantage of the privilege.*

As to the fear that the English Sunday will degenerate into the "Continental Sunday" if this innovation is permitted, who has seen, either in France or Germany, anything like the amount of drunkenness on Sunday that he may see any Sunday—morning, afternoon, and night—in the streets of our large towns? And a more orderly, intelligent, and decent crowd can hardly be seen than you may see any Sunday in the Louvre or the Luxembourg. It is hardly necessary to meet the old effete argument about the Divine institution of the "Sabbath." Our Sunday is not the

* I am indebted to the courtesy of Mr. Howarth, F.R.A.S., Curator of the Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield, for the following figures—Highest Sunday average of visitors (half-year ending January 31, 1888), 2,021, lowest (half-year ending January 31, 1889), 1,113. When the Gallery was first opened no less than 5,204 persons visited it on one Sunday during the four hours it was open. It is now open for three hours every Sunday, from 2 to 5 p.m., with a steady average of about 1,800 visitors. This is about twice the average of the *full* day of the Museum and Gallery combined. Of these 1,800 Mr. Howarth calculates that at least 50 per cent come with the serious purpose of studying the pictures. I am indebted also to Mr. White, Curator of the Ruskin Museum, Meersbrook, for the following—Average Sunday attendance for the year (the Museum was opened in April, 1890), 542. At first, some 3,000 persons passed the turnstile on one Sunday during the three hours the Museum is open. The present Sunday average is considerably over the (full) daily average.

"Sabbath" of the Mosaic legislation; and even if it were, the new law has put its own interpretation on the old—"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." That ought to be sufficient for doubting Christians; it sanctions neither ascetic Sabbatarianism, nor defiant disregard for the day of rest. It sanctions every attempt to make the rest of that day effectual. Rest is not necessarily idleness. The best rest often comes from change of occupation, change of interest, newly awakened energy, on fresh objects of pursuit; and there is no rest better for the body wearied with hard work in the factory, or the mill, than to be taken away from the neighbourhood of the "wearisome bitterness" of its drudgery; or for the mind dazed with the noisy clank and roll of machinery, than to get to some quiet spot where art can exercise its softening influence, or books can give it the solace of sympathetic minds. A man so influenced will better appreciate the joy of nature's companionship; be more receptive of

"The melody of woods, and winds, and waters,"

and will find a Sunday walk into the country a true "Sabbath" rest,

• "His angry spirit healed and harmonized

"By the benignant touch of love and mercy."

Nevertheless, the best rest for the Sunday is the worship of God. Sunday is "the couch of time, "care's balm and bay." It is given us for the

renewal of our powers, the repose of the wearied frame. But,

"Sundays the pillars are
"On which Heaven's palace archéd lies."

It is a wholesome instinct that has determined mankind to set apart one portion of the day of rest for worship. If we succeed in closing the public-house on Sunday, or in throwing open Picture Galleries, Museums, and Libraries, let us not therefore relax our efforts to get all classes of the community into our churches and chapels, for one service, at least, on that day. There is no preparation for the work of the coming week so efficacious as communion with God, there is nothing that helps a man so savingly to gather up his soul in quiet confidence, or that gives him such strength to meet his duties and his trials. Religion sanctions every Sunday recreation that thus helps to build up and rest the weary soul. But worship is the very breath of its existence, the atmosphere in which it "lives and moves and has its being."

In conclusion, I would ask, briefly, What is the duty of our churches and chapels with regard to the amusements of the young people connected with them? It is clearly their duty to take as much interest as possible in the young people, and to promote their welfare as far as they are able. A religious community will do well to see that they are provided with innocent and wholesome recreations. The young people will have, and ought to

have, amusement, and they will find it for themselves, and, unless properly guided, perhaps not of the most innocent kind. To serve as a preventive against vicious allurements, let every church and chapel do something to provide them with innocent recreation. This does not mean that the minister is to become a dancing master, or that he should encourage the young people to get up screaming farces, nigger minstrels, and such like exhibitions. Everything low and vulgar should be carefully excluded. But the formation of musical societies, for both vocal and instrumental music, ought to be encouraged. Scientific unions and rambling clubs for botanical, geological, archæological, or other study, might be established. The chief requisite is a competent leader. Debating societies should be got up for the discussion of subjects of social and political interest, and literary societies for the reading and discussion of papers on appropriate topics, and for the occasional rendering of dramatic selections. This should be done, not in costume, or with any attempt at scenic effect. The recitation should be rendered from memory, and with as much dramatic effect as frequent rehearsal can secure. The selections ought to be of high literary merit, and of a refining kind, taken from Shakespeare, Sheridan, Goldsmith, Sheridan Knowles, or others, and made by the discriminating judgment of a competent person. Mutual improvement classes ought to be established for the juniors. Social gatherings and picnics for Sunday

school teachers should be encouraged. Dancing at social reunions might be permitted, but only under proper restrictions. An early hour should be fixed for closing, and the limit should on no pretext whatever be extended. Some person, well-known and respected in the congregation, should always be present, and be responsible for the order of proceedings. A good gymnasium might with advantage be established in connection with the school, with temporary apparatus, to be set up and taken down each evening. This may be done at comparatively trifling cost. There should be an ample number of mattresses provided to prevent accident, both to the persons of the athletes, and to the floor of the hall. There ought always to be properly qualified teachers on the spot, and rules should be strictly enforced to prevent any member undertaking exercises too difficult or dangerous for him to do. The great object aimed at should be not to make the pupils acrobats, but to train the limbs to suppleness and the muscles to strength. Calisthenic classes for girls and young women might also be combined with the institution of a gymnasium. Drill classes, football clubs, cricket clubs, and swimming clubs should be established, and, as far as possible, be supervised by competent persons, such, especially, as have the art of making themselves popular.

By such means, and by others of a like kind, a Church or Chapel may do much, and at a moderate outlay, to provide wholesome recreation for the

young people connected with it. Its members, if they are really anxious to do something in the matter, may thus serve a double function, each good and desirable ; they will keep the young people out of temptation, and at the same time attach them to the place. Few will now-a-days, I imagine, raise the old objection, so convenient to the indifferent and the over-thrifty, that such methods tend to the "secularizing" of the Church. Religion sanctions all such methods of improving ourselves mentally, morally, and physically. So long as our Amusements are innocent, so long as they are used for the purpose they are intended, namely, to refresh, recruit, and fit us for the active labour of life, true religion approves and encourages them. "Religion "never was designed to make our pleasures less." God would not have made us capable of enjoying Amusements if He had not intended the capacity to be for our good. But as soon as they degenerate, as soon as they become incentives to vice ; as soon as they tend to hinder instead of helping on the serious work of our lives, becoming the aiders and abettors of luxury, indolence, and immorality, then Religion turns a stern and frowning face upon them ; lays her lash upon them.

Religion is given to purify, exalt, and ennoble life. It applies to our moments of relaxation from toil as much as to our hours of toil. Let us never indulge in any recreation to which Religion cannot give a hearty sanction. Let us never give our approval to

any amusement to which attaches the shadow of moral taint. We shall find there is abundant recreation left for the solace of our weariness, the refreshing of our drooping powers, and for the enjoyment of those hours of rest which God, in His merciful loving kindness, sends to us all.



VII.

RELIGION AND SOCIETY.

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I.

THE bearing of Religion upon our views of Society and the social relations and duties is in a certain sense indirect. For the primary significance of Religion is to be found in its revelation to us of a personal life which is, in and for itself, supremely worthy. If Religion has revealed no such life to us we cannot fall back upon the well-worn formula, "live for others"; for if A's supreme object in life is to further B's purposes, and B's supreme object in life is to further A's purposes, and neither A nor B has any purpose save to further the other's purpose, then life has no meaning. The formula "live for others" implies a life worth living.

Now, if a man has a real religion, then he conceives of a life supremely worth living both by himself and others. And it will be found that this life consists in

some form of *communion*, that is to say, a deepened intercourse, with the glow of emotion upon it, with something not ourselves. Lucretius is the noblest exponent of a purely scientific religion. To him it was an ecstatic joy mentally to contemplate the atoms which he conceived of as the ultimate elements of all things; and as they revealed themselves to him, and led his gaze through the long vistas of familiar objects and processes into the inmost and secret recesses of nature's laboratory, he was "seized with a certain godlike joy and shuddering." Wordsworth is the generally recognised type of such as find this supreme life in communion with nature *not* "murdered" "by dissection", or resolved into her component atoms. But in Wordsworth this religion of nature is mingled with much else, and a purer type of it will be found in Morris's heroine* with her passionate cry, as she leans, with a lover's caress, on the wall of an old building, that seems to be a part of the landscape, "O me! O me! how I love the earth, and the seasons, and weather, and all things that deal with it, and all that grows out of it, as this has done . . . The earth, and the growth of it, and the life of it! If I could but say or show how I love it!" Auguste Comte is the type of those who have sought this supreme life in ideal communion with "Humanity," and with certain chosen representatives of it. But in his later years he was led by a most

* "News from Nowhere," pp 227, 228.

noteworthy extension of his system to look beyond humanity, and seek communion with the earth and her fulness, and even with the very space through which she floats, and the basal facts of the Universe which we speak of as abstract laws. All these systems profess to offer to man a life which is supremely worth living, a life of loving, or of knowing, or of both, which needs not to justify itself by leading to anything beyond, but is itself a goal. And, therefore, whether we can allow them to be religious or not, they, at least, profess to do what Religion does—*i.e.*, to save life from barrenness, and to put meaning into the reciprocal helpfulness of men by waking in them a supreme affection, and opening to them a supreme life which they may live themselves, and which they may help others to live.

But to most of the readers of this essay it will appear that all these are, at best, but imperfect and one-sided *substitutes* for Religion, and that the only really satisfying answer to the demand “shew us a life truly worth living” is given when we are called into communion with the Eternal Spirit, in whom all things live and move and have their being. The supreme work of the religious teacher is to wake men’s souls to a consciousness of this life, and to deepen their action, thought, and feeling into communion with God, into the life of knowing and of loving which is life indeed. It is only in so far as they can do this that the prophets and psalmists of the Old Testament are still religious teachers for

us; it is because they did this that Jesus and Paul changed the face of the world. It was this life which all the great teachers of the mediæval Church, from Augustine to Dante, poured into the mind of humanity. It was the lyric utterance of this life and joy of the heart that rang in the Protestant Reformers' hymns, and afterwards in Charles Wesley's. In many a passage of Coleridge and Wordsworth, in many an utterance alike of Faber or Newman, and of Parker or Martineau, this communion with God is revealed, either through joyous consciousness of what is, or the yearning sense of what might be, as the only true life. And it is the same God-consciousness that stamps, with the look of peaceful fruition, the features of many a humble soldier in the Salvation Army.

Life was worth living to Francis of Assisi as "possessing all things with intensest love"; like Coleridge after him, he joined the great "hymn of the creatures," and with brother sun and sister moon, brother wind and sister water, mother earth and brother fire and sister death of the body, he sang the glory and was caught up into the love of God.

Life was life indeed to Bernard when, having passed through all the lower grades of love, having first loved himself and then loved God for what He might do for him, and then loved God for God's own self, he realised for a moment what it was for a man not to love himself at all save for God's sake, and, as the iron is transmuted into the glow of the furnace,

to feel his will transmuted into God's will, so that the very joy of heaven should not be that he at last had his way, but that God's will at last swept uncontrolled through him.

It is the office of Religion to call men into this life —this life which, whether it endure a moment or for ever, is in virtue of its quality, not of its duration, the life eternal.

✓ And if any man has lived, or has conceived this life eternal, it transfigures all. It transfigures his relations with the material world, his daily, temporal life. It transfigures his relations to those he loves. Human fellowship is no longer a purely reciprocal intercourse that has no reference to anything beyond itself, for it deepens into the mutual helpfulness and the common joy of those who, as they are drawn nearer to each other, are lifted nearer to God, and it becomes itself a veritable communion. The struggle against evil passions becomes less and less a mere clearing away or restraining of obstacles to life, and more and more a positive widening and deepening of life itself. And above all the divine pity of the weak and wretched and sin-laden, the divine discontent with the sordid and foul conditions and surroundings of the life of so many of our fellow men, is no longer a mere shrinking from the bearing or the contemplation of suffering and pain, but becomes a summons to the children of God to enter upon their heritage of life and love. It is all the difference between striking a light for fear we should add to

our other miseries the pain of striking our limbs against the furniture and spiking our eyes on nails and hooks in the wall, and throwing back the shutters and lifting the sash that the morning air and the golden sunshine may stream in and gladden and quicken our lives, reveal the beauty and the love within our home, and woo us to the wide world of glory that lies beyond.

The man who has a Religion, and he alone, has life. And though the direct office of Religion is to wake and to sustain that life, yet it follows of necessity that our whole conception of society and of its goal must be affected in its very inmost essence by the presence or absence of Religion in our own heart.

In merest outline and suggestion, then—for no more can be expected—I must now attempt to indicate the specific note in the religious man's conception of Society.

II.

The abiding type of religious Utopias is the family. The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man lie at the very basis of our conception of a regenerated society. When these two great conceptions are not only received into our hearts but incorporated into all our institutions, then the "Word of God" will in very truth have been "made flesh," and the Kingdom of God will be in our midst.

It is true that, when we speak in this way of the family relations, we are speaking of them not as they generally are in actual experience, but as we conceive them ideally. Family life, as we see it, is too often marred by selfishness, tyranny, pride, and narrowness ; but we retain a distinct ideal—not too remote from frequent, if not universal, experience—of the family life as dominated in its main relations by the law of love. The inmate of a home in which there is a real family life may feel sore, injured, resentful, or rebellious, but he knows all the time that he will *have to come round in the end*, because the affection that he now rejects in his wayward self-will is too strong for him, and will wait for him and draw him with its silent, never-ceasing pressure until he is compelled to yield. There is in his home the ever-present symbol of the Love that rules the world ; and, except in his worst and most wilful moments, if he feels neglected, he fights against his own want of faith in a tenderness that he cannot doubt, even while perplexed by its silence. If in carelessness or selfishness he has sinned against the spirit of brotherhood, the reproof of his conscience is quick and sure, and he is eager to serve rather than to be served in future. In a word, within the precincts of the home, it *looks* as if the law of love were the law of life ; it is not hard to believe in God ; the door is always open to the better life even if we have turned aside to the worse ; the whole organisation of life is formed upon the lines of mutual affec-

tion, and the members have "the same care one for another."

Let me repeat that I am speaking of the ideal which we consciously have before us in the family life, and which exercises a moulding influence upon its relations, and am indulging in no illusions as to the complete and general realisation of that ideal.

Now, if our insistence on the "brotherhood of man" as a principle of life means anything, it means that the ideal we reverence in family life must be our ideal in public life also. The sinful, the indolent, the selfish, and the passionate should find in the institutions and organisations of the world, as they find in the institutions and organisations of home, the abiding testimony to a higher law than that by which they live, exercising its silent ceaseless pressure upon them. The mutinous and reckless should feel that the very hand that turns the key of their prison cells is the hand of love. The weak and foolish should know that, though they fall and go astray seventy times in a day, they will yet be lifted up and led into the true way, in tenderness not in scorn, by the stronger and wiser ones around them. A noble emulation should take the place of a murderous competition, and the zest of life should be found in successes that bring further life to all, instead of successes which are some one else's failure and defeat.

If I am asked how we are to set about realising this ideal, and am told that the statement as I have

made it is a mere barren commonplace, I can only answer that such phrases as the "Co-operative Movement," "Unionism," "Paternal Legislation," "Reformatories," "Refuges," "The land for the people," and such movements as the Free Libraries, Free Education, Preservation of Open Spaces, and so forth, indicate, often by their very names, the presence and action amongst us of aspirations towards the ideal of which I have spoken. Whatever we may think of the honesty, wisdom, chivalry, or practical beneficence of any or all of the movements or measures enumerated, they all start from the idea of giving such utterance to the collective life as to make each individual feel that he is surrounded by friendly forces, anxious for his welfare, sensitive to his sorrows, ready to succour his weakness instead of taking advantage of it, seeking to raise him up when fallen, and to restore him when he has gone astray, recognising the foundation truth of Religion that there is a full life for him, worthy to be lived, if he can but get at it.

These agencies and ideals may seem, even in aspiration, to cover but a part of the practical life of the world, and may even seem to some tacitly to assume a system of stern and unbrotherly competition and "struggle for existence" behind them, but they are, at least in their avowed intention, attempts to carry the ideal of the family life beyond the family limits, and so to give wider extension and reality to the conception of the "brotherhood of man." My

contention is that, whether by these or by other and better agencies, the truly religious man must and will seek to bring the whole of our industrial and social life under the dominion of these same ideals.

The opposite contention is formulated with singular boldness and baldness by Mr. Herbert Spencer,* who insists on a sharp contrast between the ethics of the family and the ethics of the state; and declares that if either of these systems should invade the region properly sacred to the other, the consequences must inevitably be disastrous. Within the family, generosity must be the rule; that is to say, strength must serve weakness, and inability to contribute largely to the common stock must not exclude any member from his full share of its enjoyment. Here, in fact, the socialist ideal must reign, and each must contribute in proportion to his powers, and receive in proportion to his needs. But outside the Family all this is to be reversed. Here the supply of life-sustaining appliances must be strictly proportioned to the life-sustaining efforts put forth. Or in other words, each member of society is to enjoy what he can secure by the strong arm and the keen brain. Only then, Mr. Spencer assures us, can the higher types of humanity be evolved and preserved in the struggle for existence. Any other rule will perpetuate the unworthier types at the expense of the worthier.

Here, then, we have two antagonistic ideals of

*See especially his "Sociology," vol i., pp. 740—742.

social organisation. According to the one, the family ethics are to furnish the type of all human relations ; according to the other, the weal of society depends upon their being strictly confined to their own narrow circle of influence.

But why in the latter case, we may ask, should family ethics be allowed at all? Because, answers Mr. Spencer, the race would otherwise perish by the death of all its young. Apportion care and attention to life-sustaining powers from the first, and the "useless" and "unmeritorious" infant will get nothing, instead of being the most cared for member of the household. Hence family ethics must be cultivated for the preservation of the young. So far Mr. Spencer. But it is essential to note that this is shifting the ground; for instead of discriminating between the "worthier" and the "unworthier" *individuals* at each period of life, we are now discriminating between the immature and helpless *stage of existence*, and the mature and productive stage. The State, on the strictest evolutionary principles, might undertake to devote a part of its resources to the maintenance and maturing of the most promising children, leaving the rest to perish, and might thus from the very first apportion sustenance to (relative and prospective) life-sustaining powers. The peculiarity of the family ethics is that they assign not more care to the helpless infant than to the strong man, but more care to the weak and sickly infant than to the strong and healthy one, more care to the

crippled and invalided brother or sister than to the successful and sound one. Thus, from the first and to the last, the Family ethics and the State ethics, as defined by Mr. Spencer, run counter to each other; and even in the nursery family affection tends to secure the preservation of inferior types, and is therefore anti-social in its effect. It interferes with the process of evolution of the fittest by means of the struggle for existence, it substitutes the method of preserving the feeble and redeeming the base, for the method of elimination, and must, so far, be a drag upon the wheels of progress, as understood by the "struggle for existence" evolutionists. It is in vain to attempt to find a place for the family ethics in that scheme of things which regards the preservation of the so-called "unworthy" as a disaster. You cannot hand over the nursery to this spirit of tenderness while jealously excluding it from the haunts of men. If Mr. Spencer is right, then every impulse of private generosity or family affection that prompts the strong to protect the weak from the effect of his own weakness is treason to the State. There may be a compromise between private benevolence and public duty, there may be a compromise between family affection and the claims of the race, but a compromise is not a harmony, and life must lose its unity.

The question, therefore, is : Are we, with the religious world, to look for the extension of the ideals of family ethics till they embrace all human relations,

or are we, with the struggle-for-material-existence evolutionists, to accept ideals which must ultimately supersede the family ethics altogether? In other words, is the ideal of family life a survival, or a prophecy?

III.

More than would at first sight be supposed may be urged in favour of the contention that the family ideals are a mere survival destined to go down before the advancing tide of civilisation. The essence of the family feeling is that such an one has a natural claim to such and such treatment and affections from us, because he is our child, brother, father, or whatever it may be. In a word, his *status* confers upon him certain privileges and lays upon him certain duties. Now, this conception of *status* appears once to have been so universal that the whole of human conduct was regulated by its ethics. Not only had the slave his definite status in the family and in the State, but the smith, the soldier, the swine herd, and so forth, had each his status which determined the acts and the feelings appropriate to him with reference to all other members of the community. And doubtless the feeling of any one of these castes toward any other appeared to those who lived under the system just as much a dictate of "nature" as the family feelings appear to us. Now the history of civilisation, as Sir Henry Maine has taught us, has consisted largely in the progressive transition from the ethics of *status* to the ethics of *contract*; and here

we find the true basis of the contrast drawn by Mr. Spencer. The family life is the most noticeable survival of a system of ethics based upon status, whereas the "State," as conceived by Mr. Spencer, represents the vast aggregate of the relations based upon contract, which have gradually absorbed and superseded the relations of status. And now we can understand the meaning and bearing of that tendency to challenge the family institutions and traditions, which is so marked a feature of our times. It is merely the next step forward of the advancing forces of the ethics of contract, which are now attacking the very citadel of the ethics of status. Will the family, as an institution, with its ethics of status, be able to hold out against the rising tide of contractual relations; will it be able to say "Hitherto shalt thou go and no further"? Or will the idea that we owe anything particular to our children, parents, brothers and sisters, or have any claim on them, beyond such as are secured by the contracts we may make with or concerning them, go the way of all superstitions, and be numbered with the exploded prejudices of the past? The central relation of the family—that of man and woman—is already very largely contractual, but the element of status in it is still of commanding importance.^c Will that, too, disappear?

To ask these questions is to ask whether the religious view of society has pledged itself to an obsolescent form of civilisation. If the ethics of the

family are the last survival of a vanishing system of ethics of status, and if the future is all for the ethics of contract, then the religious ideal of society is doomed.

IV.

When we trace the gradual breakdown of the ethics of status we witness something like the emancipation of human activity. The old system laid intolerable restrictions upon the free movement of humanity. The rigid prescriptions of caste and custom made all men slaves; and we can but rejoice in every step of advance towards a belief that a man's birth has not irrevocably fixed his life and relations irrespective of his powers and his will. The creed which declares that he has neither duties nor claims fixed for him by the position into which he is born, but is free to make his own bargain with nature and with man, that he need bow beneath no yoke of status, but need only take upon his neck the self-imposed and freely chosen yoke of contract—this creed seems to come like the glad tidings of liberty to them that sit in bondage. And so, for instance, it is one of the great aims of an earnest band of reformers to lift the relations of the country hind to the Squire and Parson out of the domain of status, and bring them under that of contract. The laws of status which exclude a tradesman, however cultivated, from some societies, and a solicitor, however eminent, from certain clubs, are regarded with contempt by the most enlightened amongst us,

as relics of barbarism fast degenerating into something worse.

And yet, on the other hand, all our highest ideals of human relationships insist on being independent of contract, and reverting to some form of status. Friendship is itself a status, though an informal and undefined one. It recognises claims and duties that come under no contract; and even when relationships are frankly and firmly based upon contract, it is, nevertheless, the "uncovenanted" graces of intercourse that humanise them. Status, then, may clearly be either higher or lower than contract; and we shall reconcile history with the dictates of our own hearts, and harmonise the "testimony of 'the Holy Spirit'" with the testimony of the external facts, if we say that the mission of the régime of contract has been to break down all the low and unworthy conceptions, and all the hampering restrictions of the régime of status, and then progressively to yield to the very régime it has thus purified, and take its permanent place in Society as the instrument of a principle higher than itself.

Thus we see that there are two streams of tendency in history, only in appearance running counter to one another. The one abolishes all the manifold conceptions of the *status of class inequality*, and proclaims the reign of contract and competition as the reign of freedom. The other maintains the conception of the *status of equality and affection*, and proclaims the reign of co-operation and mutual

helpfulness as the reign of love. The family ethics are indeed a "survival," but a survival of the fittest, the imperishable type of that status to which all others must at last conform.

V.

This transition from status through contract to a purified and exalted status receives an illustration from the history of our religious conceptions so remarkable and so instructive as amply to justify a digression.

Our ideas of our relations to God have passed, and are passing, precisely through the stages here indicated.

The early Israelite's relation to Yahweh (Jehovah) was strictly one of status. There was a "natural" connection between Yahweh and his people, behind which it never occurred to anyone to look.

Chemosh, Moloch, the Baal, and Yahweh each had his own people, and the relations of each deity alike to his own subjects, and to those of his rivals, was determined by status. A man who wandered from his own land into the territory of another god had the status of an alien subject, and must serve the god under whose jurisdiction he found himself.

But as the prophetic conception of the God of Israel became loftier, this primitive conception could no longer satisfy men's minds. The functions of all the other deities were gradually absorbed by Yahweh, till the whole history of the world and the whole framework of created things came to be

regarded as his work. The relations of one particular people to the universal God could now no longer be regarded as based on a natural status, and men inquired how it came to pass that the Eternal was the God of Israel. The answer was that he had *chosen* Israel of his free grace from out of all the peoples of the earth, and had established his *covenant* with him. The history of the world was rewritten from this point of view, and the covenant between God and Israel became its leading motive. Thus the conception of status was distinctly and definitely superseded by the conception of contract. And the result was an immediate uplifting of the relations between God and man to an indefinitely higher plane. The "covenant" conferred unique privileges, and imposed unique duties, upon Israel; it was the result of a free act, not the mere expression of an unexplained fact; it implied liberty of movement, deliberate choice, and moral relations which might be developed or broken off; and hence the domestic symbol that approved itself most fully to the prophetic mind was the relation of husband and wife, in which the "covenant" or "contract" is a factor of such commanding importance.

And sooner or later it was inevitable that this conception should lead to the theoretical breaking down of the walls of tribal and national separation. The "covenant" might be broken and annulled; it might be renewed; then surely its area might

be extended, and others than the seed of Abraham might be brought within its embrace. It is of the nature of contract that it neglects race and class, and starts on the assumption of some kind of freedom and equality in the state that precedes the contract.

This is as far as the conception of a covenant can go ; and this is as far as Paul, Augustine, Luther, and the majority of Christians have ever carried their conceptions. They tell us that we all of us have the power to *enter into* the privileges of the new covenant. All day its gates are open, and there is neither barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free in Christ. This conception of the open covenant to which all men are called stands morally and spiritually whole heavens higher than the narrow nationalism of status which it superseded.

But in its turn this religion of contract is destined to be superseded, and is being superseded, by a religion of purified and exalted status. When Jesus taught the Divine Sonship of Man, without adoption, without covenant or contract, just in virtue of his humanity, he taught a higher religion of status to which the religion of the covenant was a necessary step, but a step only. In the parable of the prodigal son we have the perfect and immortal expression of this religion of natural relations in which all the lower have been absorbed into the highest, and the universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man are seen as the great ocean-thought into which every

stream of religious progress must flow at last and find its peace.

VI.

We now return to our proper subject—viz., the religious view of society and the social relations. There seems to be nothing abnormal in the transition from a theory of society based on status, through a theory based on contract, back to a theory based on a purified and ennobled conception of status. The family status has approved itself fittest to survive. The solvent power of the conception of contract has eliminated, or is eliminating, the servile status, the class status, the trade status, and is now itself yielding to the softening and supplementing influence of that type of the relations of status against which it has itself been unable to prevail.

It remains to deal with one or two misconceptions and difficulties which stand in the way of accepting the ideal family relations as the type of the wider relations of the social and industrial world.

In the first place, we often form a sentimental and unreal idea of the relationships of family life. We speak as if altruism reigned supreme, and egoism were entirely suppressed in an ideal family. This is so grotesquely untrue—even to ideal fact—that it is hard to conceive how the notion can have arisen. The fact is that egoism and altruism are not necessarily conflicting and rival motive powers. They are capable of perfect harmonising, and the ideal to aim at is neither the suppression and absorption of one

by the other, nor yet a mechanical compromise between them, but a due blending and harmonising in which each takes its legitimate and needful place, but which is itself neither one nor the other, but the reconciliation of the two. The member of the family who eliminates himself robs the family of its best wealth, and the member who makes it easy and natural for the rest to ignore him confers a moral injury upon them. Egoism in the sense of the impulse to utter, to realise, and even to assert, one's self, to assuage one's natural appetites, and seek one's natural enjoyments, is as essential an ingredient of a strong and healthy character as altruism itself, and it enters as necessarily into every healthy and normal relation of life.

Take the primary and central relation of the family, the union of the sexes. Whether regarded from its physical or its mental side, this union rests upon an imperious demand for self-realisation and self-utterance. It is as intensely and passionately egoistic as anything in life; and yet to realise its own possibilities even from the egoistic point of view, it must be blended with a pure and exalted altruism which becomes indistinguishable from itself, the two being lost in something which is neither because it is both.

The truly wedded pair live in and for each other, we say. It is true, but it is not all the truth. If one of them should live wholly for the other, inspired by the tenderest altruistic affection, but finding no

added fulness of self-realisation, no completer self-utterance, no deeper consciousness of individual life in the relationship, if egoism should cease to support the common life and should reap no fruit from the union, the spectacle is amongst the most pathetic, nay, even amongst the most tragic, that the world affords.

And so with the other family relations, the relation of parent to child and of child to parent, the relation of brothers and sisters, and the ties of remoter kinship. They successively occupy a smaller portion of the whole field of vision, and the personal life asserts itself in growing independence of them; but still the same rule holds good, the ideal is a harmony, not a compromise.

Again, in these relations of status contract has its legitimate place. "What will it be worth your while to do for me, if I do this for you?" is a question which may serve as an instrument of investigation and adjustment between two lives united in perfect harmony. Yet this question is the very soul of contract. As the circle widens and immediate perception of the wants and tastes of others becomes less and less possible, this question may progressively rise in importance till it dominates and determines more and more the acts of life; but it may still be looked upon prevailingly as a means by which we get at each other's wishes, give each other and ourselves the fullest measure of scope and choice, and adjust the family life with the best material and

spiritual economy, not as an instrument by which each one endeavours to get the most and to give the least in his dealings with his fellows.

The family then supplies us with the ideals of a harmony between egoism and altruism, and of a system of contract subordinate to and instrumental of a spirit of affectionate good-will. Is there any reason why these ideals should not gradually draw to themselves the whole field of human activity ?

VII.

“ ‘Yes,’ it may be replied, ‘There is a reason. You have protested against a sentimental view of family life, but you yourself take a hopelessly sentimental view of industrial and social relations. We must look at life and human nature as they are; and the simple fact is that outside the family and the circle of immediate friendship the average man is frankly and even brutally selfish. At any rate the whole zest of business is found in getting to the front, and whatever benevolences a man may feel disposed to indulge in out of business hours, within those hours he is inspired by the one desire to make his business a success, which means to make it pay. You must not expect him to forego any advantage, or be inspired by any philanthropic motive. You smile at the passionate zeal for the public convenience which he professes in his trade circulars, and only do not call him a hypocrite, because you regard him as a humourist, and know that he does not expect to be taken seriously. Do what you can outside the com-

"mercian and business world, but never look to make
"business itself a philanthropic institution. In its
"origin, and in its temper, it rests wholly upon the
"self-seeking impulses. Why even the preacher of
"the gospel thinks he has reached the very limits of
" 'success,' and secured the first 'prize of the pro-
"fession,' if he has secured an Archbishopric with
"fifteen thousand a year. Whatever you do, then,
"clear your mind of cant, and remember that busi-
"ness is one thing and benevolence is another, and
"the world does very wisely to keep them distinct."

Now I have not very much to urge in answer to this. It has been said that no one can "refute a
"sneer." Neither can anyone argue down a temper
of mind. But even the commercial temper is visibly
affected by the spirit of our age, and it is not every
commercial man who would care to make himself
responsible for the representation of the spirit of
commerce which I have given above. But, mean-
while, let us turn once more to the family. The
history of commercial relations is the repetition of
the early history of the family; may not the
maturity of the family relations contain the prophecy
of the final form of industrial relations? It is im-
possible to conceive any institution more wholly
unromantic, more sordidly or basely selfish, 'more
brutally disregardful of the feelings of others, than
the institution of primitive and savage marriage.
The slave-wife, captured by her lord, is treated with-
out the smallest degree of affection, to say nothing

of chivalry, and her relative weakness is taken advantage of to the very uttermost. There can hardly be a relationship which in its earlier stages was more brutal. But we see to what it has grown. What need we despair of after this ?

Even at a higher stage of civilisation than the mere savagery of which I have spoken our present conception marriage is unrealisable. I have been told by a lady and gentleman, who had travelled in the East, that their head guide—a very superior and intelligent Arab—interviewed them one day as a deputation from the camp servants generally to ask them to explain something that had puzzled them. “Why was it that Monsieur always gave Madame the best of everything ? Was Madame, perhaps, “a princess ?” They tried to explain that Madame being not so strong as Monsieur needed more care to save her from exhaustion, and that Monsieur would rather undergo any necessary hardship himself than let it fall on one who would feel it more. But it was all in vain. The idea could not find a lodgement in the Arab’s brain. It was to him a strange, perhaps a monstrous, inversion of the natural order of things, for which Monsieur and Madame might have reasons of their own, but which they could not, or would not explain.

The history of savage and civilised infanticide, and the grim “*patria potestas*,” of ancient times, tells the same story with reference to the parental relations. All along the line the family relations

have been frankly, even brutally, egoistic, but have found at last that in the true harmony of egoism and altruism is their true life. So may it be likewise with those wider and more complex relations of which, in their regenerated form, I hold that the family is to be the type.

VIII.

To sum up. The religious view of society starts from the personal knowledge of the reality of a life supremely worth living, which carries with it the perception of the unmeasured possibilities open to each human soul. To the religious man, therefore, it is impossible to acquiesce in the disinheritance of any child of God; and the conception of human brotherhood must furnish the norm of his ideals of human society. The institutions of social and industrial life must be so remodelled as to be felt as the utterance of a friendly, a sustaining, and a redeeming power, even by the most selfish, perverse, rebellious, or weak of mankind. Little as we can see at present how this view is to win to itself the whole field of life, and permeate its whole body of practical institutions, yet the history of family relations encourages us to hope where we cannot see, and already in manifold directions experiments are being made, and movements started, which all work one way, and that way the right one. Religious men will not allow their sympathy with the ends in view to blind them to the weak points of schemes for improving the conditions of life of the masses, and changing the temper of

commercial life; but they will watch every movement in the direction of extending the area over which the family ideals hold sway, with the hope that they will succeed, and the determination to go on trying if they fail—not with the hope that they will fail, and that when they have failed men will acquiesce in things as they are. They will seek always and everywhere to consecrate strength to the service of weakness, and to strip themselves of privilege if thereby they can secure an equal heritage to all their brethren. But above all and in all they will keep alive in their own hearts, and strive to wake in the hearts of others, that living love of nature, of man, and of God, which if a man have not, it is in vain for him to gain the whole world.



VIII.

RELIGION AND ART.

BY LAWRENCE PEARSALL JACKS, M.A.

IT forms no part of the intention of the writer of this Essay to offer opinions concerning the æsthetic merits of any work or school of art. The object of the Essay is to state the moral and religious value of Art to those who occupy a peculiar position in the world of theological thought, and to point such persons to Art as a record and revealer of the inner or spiritual life of man. It accords with the general purpose of the volume that the present writer should thus lay emphasis on his endeavour to deal with the subject of "Religion and Art" not in a general manner, but from the point of the view special to those with whom he is in theological sympathy.

The point of view referred to is distinct from that of the Sceptic on the one hand, and the dogmatic Christian on the other. It belongs to the mind which believes in the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, the Immortality of the Soul, and in Christ as a type of humanity

at its best a mind which holds these beliefs, not as dogmas fixed by authority, but as doctrines approved by the religious consciousness, and open to change if the religious consciousness at a future time can no longer entertain them in their present form. Such a point of view must necessarily give a special form to the thought of him who occupies it concerning all the great problems and interests of the human soul. The particular interest allotted for treatment to the present writer being that of Art, the following pages will be an attempt to answer the question, "What is the value and meaning of Art to "one who calls himself Unitarian, Free Christian, or "by any other name which shall describe the condition of belief unfettered by dogma defined in the "foregoing sentences?"

I.

The view about to be given of what Art is and teaches is intimately bound up with a certain doctrine of revelation. Discarding utterly the claim of any authority, other than that of the ever-developing religious consciousness of humanity, to prescribe what shall and what shall not be believed; discarding no less the theory that the process of revelation has been completed in the past, or that the function of the religious consciousness is merely to unfold what has been given—the present writer considers the field of revelation as co-extensive with the universe and its progress as identical with the ever-widening progress of the human mind. Whatever

of new and unsuspected truth the world of Nature still hides from the inquirer, whatever moral laws have still to be evolved in the organic growth of society, whatever strength of conviction in a living God has still to be reached, all this belongs to the revelation of the future, and has not been anticipated, though it may have been hoped for, in the revelations of the past. Until the Universe has yielded up its last secret and the human soul achieved its full development, the process of revelation will be incomplete. Revelation is, therefore, endless.

More fully described, the view of revelation on which the thought of this Essay depends is that which finds the manifestation of God objectively in the external world of Nature, subjectively in the internal world of the human soul. Nature without and the soul within are the two great books from which we read of God and God's Fatherhood, of Man, his mission, his duties, and his immortality. But a moment's reflection shows that these two, Nature and the Soul, may be resolved into one. Without in any sense judging the question as to whether there is or is not an external world, we must admit that all we know concerning this external world we know through the medium of our own minds. Our minds are the mirrors in which we read of its power, its beauty, its order and its duration. Not denying, therefore, the practical usefulness or the abstract truth of describing the sources of reve-

lation as two, it will help to explain our present subject if we regard the two as united into one—the human soul. This one instrument is the organ, interpreter, and revealer of the life, the power, the love, the thought, and the righteousness of God. God is revealed in Humanity, and in Nature as perceived by Humanity.

In this view what is the place occupied by Art? What significance does Art possess as a record and revealer of spiritual things when the human soul is asserted to be the all comprising source of revelation?

Art is a name for the most complete and most intense form of expression for the inner life of man. Its exercise compels a combination of the highest human faculties of conscience, intellect, imagination, feeling, and skill, and becomes successful in proportion as these faculties are, on the one hand, strong and versatile, and, on the other, *charged with the personal life and force of their possessor*. When these are present in the highest degree, the result of the Artist's efforts is the creation of great, lovely, and immortal works. The successful pursuit of the Fine Arts demands, as its first condition, the concentration of faculties upon the matter in hand and the yielding up of the entire man to the artistic aim, and the more complete the self-surrender of the Artist, the nobler will be the result. In all great artistic work, therefore, we have a more perfect self-revelation of the worker's soul than in any

other type of human expression. And it follows from this, that if Religion form one of the elements of the artist's character, or that of the age which he reflects, it will assuredly betray itself in his creations. There is no spiritual quality which pervades character so completely as the emotion connected with the religious life, whatever be the special form this latter may take. Wherever it is present, it will certainly make its presence felt by signs intelligible to a sympathetic eye. And if absent, its absence will be equally apparent.

These statements must be guarded by one or two remarks before we proceed farther. In spite of what has been said, a religious work of art is not necessarily a sign of religion on the part of him who produced it. A Madonna, in whose eyes we read the language of Infinite Love, may have been painted by a sceptic. The "Last Supper" of Leonardo da Vinci, the most famous religious picture in the world, is the work of one who is supposed to have been an unbeliever. A fine landscape may be eloquent to the mind of the beholder of the inner soul of nature, though to the painter it was merely the expression of some vague intuition which he himself could neither interpret nor trust. But all these seeming contradictions are intelligible to one who holds that the Holy Spirit of God does not confine its visitations to such as acknowledge its divinity and trust its messages, but communicates with all souls, not excepting those who cannot recog-

nise the guest they entertain. It would probably be admitted by every seeker after a broad and generous view of life that in all spheres of action divine impulses sway the conduct of men who deny their divineness, as well as of such as acknowledge their source. And so it is in the world of Art. There are good grounds for supposing that more than one of the greatest masters of Christian Art had no other than an artistic interest in the subjects they treated and did not consciously put into their work the meanings which others can read there. But it is no mere hollow fancy of ours if we find the works of such men fraught with spiritual appeal. A thing that is perfectly beautiful in architecture, sculpture, painting, music or poetry, is, by reason of its beauty, competent to act as a symbol of a whole family of highest truths, not one of which, perhaps, formed any part of the artist's intention. The artist may be unconscious of any moral or religious motive, and devote himself wholly to Beauty, and yet by making his work beautiful he will make it didactic in a hundred unthought-of ways. All perfect forms are richly suggestive of that which is highest and dearest in the spectator's life.

There is good reason for holding, for instance, that the spiritual character of much of the best Art of the Renaissance was undesigned by its authors. What we read there of spiritual emotion is a true and legitimate interpretation, but it does not always justify the inference that the artist was a man

with religious convictions. The great painters of the Renaissance were, indeed, formally united with the Catholic Church. But there can be little doubt that the greatest of them cared far more for their Art than for their Church. What set them on was not the aspiration to embody faith, but the love of the Beautiful, and the delight of practising their Art. They received their commissions from Popes and Cardinals whose manner of life leads us to infer that they were infidels both in Religion and Morals. Vasari says that Perugino was an atheist. Leonardo da Vinci, had he lived in modern times, would have been called a materialist. Michael Angelo, who set forth the entire scheme of Catholic theology on the walls of the Sistine Chapel, in a manner which seems to breathe the very soul of the Church, was himself the prey of constant doubt. About the time he was at work upon his "Last Judgment," he wrote to Vittoria Colonna, "I am going in search of truth with uncertain step. My heart, floating unceasingly between vice and virtue, suffers and finds itself failing, like a weary traveller wandering on in the dark. . . . Clear away my doubts. Teach me in my wavering how my unenlightened soul may resist the tyranny of passion unto the end." * In a sonnet written near the end of his life he says, "Now I see how my soul fell into the error of making Art her idol and her sovereign lord." And we must remember further that the painters whose works we are accustomed to extol as

supreme examples of religious Art, by no means confined themselves to subjects of that nature. They represented the loves of pagan gods and goddesses with as much artistic devotion as they gave to Madonnas and Saints. Judging by results, it seems plain that Titian was as truly inspired in painting the "Bacchus and Ariadne" as in painting the "Tribute Money" or the "Death of Peter Martyr." Cellini's "Perseus" is as great in its own style as Michael Angelo's "David." "Monna Lisa" is as wonderful as the "Sistine Madonna." The portrait of this lady seems to have engaged the artist's soul no less completely than did the head of Christ in "The Last Supper" at Milan.

What are we to infer from these facts? Must we conclude that this so-called religious painting bears no religious record concerning the souls of the men who wrought, and the society in which they lived? Are we to conclude that they merely seized upon theological and Christian themes as a pretext for producing beautiful works of Art? Such a conclusion would leave too much unexplained. We should still want an answer to the question—"Why, if these artists sought only to represent beauty, did they find by far the major part of the beauty they sought to represent amid subjects of a religious character? Why, with the whole field of nature and human life to select from, did they receive three out of four of their great inspirations from within the narrow limits of Christian history,

“thought, and feeling?” The answer seems to be that, whether or not religious conviction existed in the mind of the artist, his work distinctly appeals to religious feeling in the mind of the spectator. He assumes that the souls of men are to be touched by the expression of spiritual qualities, that they sufficiently recognise the worth and importance of Christian truth to respond to his effort, to feel his meaning and be moved inwardly by that which he seeks to convey. He proceeds upon the supposition that Religion is the chief concern of life. Neither the matter nor the manner of the great religious art of the past can be explained except on the theory that it was addressed to a public which recognised the truths it suggested as absolute and felt the emotions it aroused as supreme.

The greatest minds of the age will not devote themselves to the artistic expression of religious truth unless they can take it for granted that for the world at large Religion is the most important matter in life, and involves the weightiest human interests. Let these conditions be given and, if great Art exist at all, it will certainly turn to the setting forth of sacred themes. Given a society where politics, science, social reform or the economic struggle for existence have not yet disputèd the claims of faith to be the most important interest of the human soul, given the power of artistic expression in gifted individuals, and the necessary conditions exist for the production of great religious

Art. It is not necessary to assume, among these conditions, that the artists themselves shall be believers. Whether they believe or whether they doubt, they know the mood of the world and, unless we remain blind to the power of imagination, it is easy to understand how they will adopt the prevailing temper and cause their work to possess an inner life which shall speak to the contemporary world of what it holds highest and best. This does not deny that sincere conviction is a special source of power to the artist; it merely affirms that the want of such conviction *in his soul* does not prevent him from creating that which shall speak to men of convictions *in theirs*.

But the converse to this must not be forgotten. When the world at large is unbelieving or distracted, as at the present time by a multitude of scientific, social, economic interests, the spiritual conditions for specifically religious art do not exist. The discouragement which proceeds from appealing to a deaf, irresponsive, unimaginative public would be too much for all but a very few. The public must be addressed by artists through forms which speak of the matters it appreciates, cares for, is interested in for the time being. The determining cause for the production of one kind of Art rather than another lies in the public, in the age, in the prevailing temper of men. Art yields to that temper, and in yielding gives its form. Thus the Fine Arts at any given period become a record of the predominant

moods, interests, loves and hates in the vicinity of which the artist lived.

Such, then, is the sense in which we understand the proposition that Art is a means of revealing the human soul—it discloses the aims and the passions which move either the artist or the world to whom he addresses himself through his work. Let us now bring this thought into connection with that from which the digression started. The soul of man, his conscious life of thought, feeling, volition, imagination, forms the all-inclusive field of revelation. This is the great book of life from which all spiritual truth is ultimately derived. The individual in search of verification must, in the last resort, consult the witness of his own conscious life—for spiritual things are spiritually discerned. But if he would consult the witness of other men's souls he can do so only by reading them from their several forms of *expression*. Now there are three chief modes by which the inner life of man expresses itself and declares its quality to the world, viz., Action, Speech, Art. These three afford the outward and sensible signs of the range and quality of personality. A man tells the story of himself in what he does, in what he says, in what he creates. These are his modes of self-revelation, and in so far as his life contains any divine element we may expect to find it revealed in all the three. Under what circumstances, then, does the self-expression of man in action, speech, and art become also a revelation of God?

This is not the place to justify a philosophical conception of God. Enough to state without comment that the Power which rules the world is revealed to us as Divine under the three attributes of Right, Truth, and Beauty. The life of man, therefore, becomes a revelation of God so far as its self-expression is, in action, morally right; in speech, intellectually true; in Art, æsthetically beautiful. God is manifested in man by the rightness of his conduct, the truth of his thought, the beauty of his creative work.

It is probable that in the last analysis Right, Truth, and Beauty are but different aspects of one and the same divine quality. At any rate, we assume that the act of giving expression to Beauty is as true an indication of the inspiring presence of the Holy Spirit in the soul of the worker as a noble course of self sacrifice in the name of Right, or the discovery by the intellect of scientific or other truth. The origin of the impulse which leads to the production of beautiful forms by way of Art is indeed quite simple. Art has been compared to skilled and methodized play. It is the result of employing, for the production of what is delightful, faculties whose ordinary function is the production of the useful. A divine law of Right and of Truth guides them in the former function; a divine law of Beauty in the latter. Art therefore expresses the fellowship of God in the joy of man—the joy of him who creates beautiful work as well as of him who beholds it. And in

no moment of life does the human soul come nearer in nature to its divine prototype than in the moment of creation, in the moment of giving beauty, worth, and meaning to formless matter.

To one who adopts this view all true Art is full of religious significance. It bears witness to a Divine impulse in the soul. It is, by reason of its true artistic quality, as veritable a revelation of God as Righteousness or Love. It does not depend for its religious character upon the particular subjects which it represents. We recognize that character as clearly in the pagan work of Phidias as the Christian work of Fra Angelico. If we rate religions high or low according to the degree in which they enforce moral motives, we gauge their spiritual worth no less accurately by the degree in which they inspire men with the artistic impulse. Canon Westcott truly remarks: "The noblest works of Art are those "which are most Christian." We may go further, and say that Christianity declares itself the noblest religion, by its capacity for inspiring the noblest Art. On the one hand, Christianity has proved its spiritual superiority to the religions it displaced by supplying men with new and higher motives for conduct, and, on the other, by creating for Art richer and purer ideals of beauty. By this second power, no less than by the first, we learn what a real influence the spirit of the Christian religion exercises upon the souls of men. If in these latter days, when other things dispute the claim of theology to be the

supreme interest of life, we are tempted to doubt whether the doctrines of the Church have ever meant very much to men, a sufficient answer would be found in the history of Christian Art from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.

That which gives form to the creative efforts of the imagination is what the world, as represented by its best spirits, believes in most sincerely and feels about most deeply. The application of this truth to Art is abundantly illustrated by the history of Catholicism. The rise of Gothic Architecture, the growth of schools of religious painting and sculpture, the composition of the Divine Comedy are Rome's best witnesses to the sway she once exercised over the soul of Europe. In these testimonies we read not only *what* men believed, but *how* they believed. They record the power of Catholic teaching upon the heart and the imagination. The arts to which Rome gave birth are her highest distinction—higher, I submit, than the type of human character she fostered. She has wielded a mightier influence than that possessed by any other form of Christianity in rendering the souls of European men susceptible to the divine impulse of Beauty. Her influence roused the imagination, kindled feeling and urged its expression in outward form. Not only has the supremest skill in Art belonged to her children, but it was they who, first in modern Europe, discovered the Arts and learned how to practice them with success.

The revelation of the Divine by way of Beauty belongs, therefore, to the Catholic rather than the Protestant Church. The function of the latter has been to reveal God as *righteous*. The best fruits of Protestantism are due to the moral, not the artistic, impulse. Her energies have been given to the education of the conscience rather than the imagination or the heart. Not Beauty, but Character has been her aim, and perhaps she has been a little blind in failing to recognise the part played by the Beautiful in the development of the Good. Protestantism is not the mother of a single Art; nay, in her eager devotion to righteousness, she has in certain moods regarded Art as the off-spring of the Devil. Nothing more clearly betrays the poverty of dogmatic Protestantism in the artistic impulse than the history of Protestant architecture. Gothic architecture, which may be reckoned among the greatest artistic triumphs of the human race, is a pure-bred child of Catholic genius. It is the symbol of aspirations peculiar to Catholicism, and wholly foreign to the Protestant faith. The cathedrals built during the Middle Ages were means by which the Church gave expression to her sense of permanence and universality, to her claim of authority over the soul, and to the fact of her separation from the world. It was fitting therefore that the building of Gothic churches should cease with the Reformation. But from that day to this Protestantism has wholly failed to produce a style of architecture appropriate to its own

genius and life, as was the Gothic to Catholicism, or the Doric to the religion of Ancient Greece. The Reformers housed their worship in churches devoted to the faith they had rejected, just as the Christians used the Parthenon for a church and the Moslems in later times for a mosque. When the Puritans began to erect their own places of worship they were satisfied with four walls and a roof. The greatest architect the English Church has produced, Christopher Wren, merely adopted the semi-classic style of the Renaissance. In spite of his singular genius he left the English Church, as he found it, without architecture of native growth and from his time to that of the Gothic revival the history of Protestant building in England is, artistically considered, a history of shame.

Not without connecting reasons, perhaps, the Gothic revival was almost contemporary with the Tractarian movement in Oxford. It was fitting that this new outburst of mediævalism should be signalised by a substitution of the Gothic style for the hideous partial imitations of Greek temples which had prevailed hitherto. But it is assuredly a sign of artistic decay that the English Church, in its revolt from pure ugliness, should have to fall back upon a style which grew out of traditions foreign to its own, which expresses ideals that Protestantism has forgotten, and which is in brief the perfect sign and symbol of the Catholic spirit, with its contempt of the world, its mystic

aspiration, its designs of universal sway over the human soul. If the adoption of this style for Protestant churches is to be justified, it can be only on the ground that in Gothic architecture there is something expressive of the universal elements shared equally by all religions.

Before leaving this part of our discussion it is well to add one or two remarks for the purpose of guarding what has gone before from being interpreted as an unjust condemnation of the Protestant influence on Art. Though Protestantism is the mother of no art, there is yet one, and that one of the noblest, in which the Protestant spirit has found a rich and varied expression. No names in the history of ancient and modern art are greater than those of Bach and Handel. The music of Bach might be not unaptly regarded as giving voice to the Hellenic, or intellectual, elements of Protestant religion; that of Handel, on the other hand, seems to speak with the voice of moral passion and to breathe the soul of the Hebrew Prophets.

Moreover, when we imply that the present is an age of decayed religious art, the phrase "religious art" should be understood only in its narrower sense, viz., art which deals with subjects recognised as religious by the theological authorities of the time being. In a wider sense all excellently wrought or deeply inspired art is religious. In a similar sense the subjects themselves may be religious if, for example, they evince a loving insight into

Nature or human life. The increasing demand of society for landscape painting certainly betrays an increasing love of natural beauty. Deepened interest in the multiform doings of man is also evident from the immense number of character pictures and portraits which cover the walls of a modern gallery. However trivial these may sometimes be in conception or execution, they assuredly indicate the beginning of an era of awakened sympathy with human life. And it will not be contended, except by the worshippers of petrified theology, that an art which shows deepened love of Nature and wider interest in man can be other than religious in its ultimate source and end. The general fact is the reverse of discouraging. It is only when one comes to study individual instances that modern art becomes suggestive of unpleasant thoughts. Why, for example, is such a large proportion of the character pictures in our modern galleries devoted to the treatment of situations which are physically or morally *painful*? Why is the most popular character picture in the Royal Academy almost invariably of this kind? Is it that our tastes are morally degraded? Is it that scenes of others' pain give the most grateful stimulant to jaded appetites? Is it that an unconscious pessimism has persuaded us that the painful side of life is its leading aspect and essence? Is it that public demand causes Art to imitate the newspaper, so becoming a record of sin and misery and a picture of men at their worst? Is it that modern

sympathy extends only to our neighbour's pain and has not yet learned to feel with him in his joy, weeping with those that weep, but not rejoicing with those that do rejoice? Be the explanation what it may, the fact is one which, if explained, would throw a strong light upon the moral temper of our times.

II.

It will be apparent that the view of Art given above has special connections with the theological position from which the writer, in common with the other contributors to this volume, regards the various problems of Life and Religion. The leading characteristics of this view would not naturally be shared either by a dogmatic Protestant or by a Sceptic. To the writer, the spiritual worth of the Christian religion is attested by the response it evokes from the individual consciousness, and by its effects on the conduct, the intellectual and artistic life of man. To the dogmatic Protestant, the attestation of the truth of Christianity is given by Authority, *i.e.*, by Church, Creed, or Bible. This difference entails a corresponding difference in the view taken of religious art. For one who occupies the latter (the dogmatic) position Christian Art is noblest because it is Christian. For one who occupies the former position this mode of statement must be reversed. He would say that one reason why he regards Christianity as the highest form of religion is because it has inspired the noblest art—because under Christian influence men have been most

susceptible to the divine impulse of beauty. In other words, it is the nobility of its Art that bears witness to the inner truth of Christianity; not the fact of its being Christian, which without further question necessitates that Christian Art shall be the best. In like manner the dogmatic Protestant would assert that a given course of conduct was right because Christ, the divine teacher, prescribed it; the writer, on the other hand, would assert that Christ was a divine teacher, because he prescribed what was right, whereas if the conscience of the world declared that what Christ prescribed was wrong, no weight of authority would persuade him that Christ was at that point divinely inspired.

And there is another difference. Wherever we recognise that an artist strives to express a beautiful ideal, we regard him as in full communion with the Holy Spirit of God, and treat his work as a truly divine creation. It matters not that he himself may deny the source from which his inspiration comes. He possesses that grace of God which dogma affirms to be conditional on belief. Neither sacraments nor assent to creeds could qualify him for a more real inspiration than that to which he yields. We affirm that the Holy Spirit of God, in choosing the human tabernacles where it will dwell, makes no distinction of persons according to creed or want of creed. The creation of beautiful work is, equally with the fulfilment of righteous conduct, the witness to the divinity of man, and the unity of man with

God. The inspiration which leads a man to saintliness within the church is of no higher quality and confers no greater privileges than that which leads him to noble creativeness in the world without. There is no reason to imagine that God was nearer to Angelico painting the Virgin on his knees than to Phidias carving those vast exalted forms of ideal men, which still speak to us, as they have spoken to ages of the past—of ethical calm, of self-control, of the dignity and power of the human soul.

The difference between our view and that natural to the Sceptic is no less apparent. To us, as to him, Art is significant not so much of the subjects it treats or the matter it imitates as of the living soul in him who wrought and in those spirits which understand and respond to the appeal of his work. To us, as to him, the ultimate significance of Art is a lesson concerning *men*. But for him the lesson ends there. To us, men are something other and more than they are to him—they are instruments of divine impulses from beyond themselves; they are the keys from which the Divine mind evokes its noblest harmonies of Right, and Truth, and Beauty. The men of whom Art teaches us are not perishable animals, but the immortal children of God and the supreme revealers of the life of God one to another. In the highest forms of human self-expression, therefore, we recognise the most eloquent language of divine truth. Such highest expression of the soul of man is achieved in the Fine Arts, and

these, therefore, beyond the delight of their appeal to our senses, are a sure witness of the love and the glory of God.

III.

Having stated the significance of Art from our characteristic point of view, we now proceed to consider with somewhat greater fulness the existing relations between the various arts of expression and the religious life of to-day. In judging of this matter, we should bear in mind that wherever life is intelligent and full of interest, an irresistible impulse urges men to express the motions of their spirits in such a manner that their thoughts, feelings, and aims shall be understood by others. When they do this with such success that their own inner life has the same meaning to those who hear, see, or read, as it has to themselves, then, whether the mode of expression be Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Music, or Literature, we may rightly consider the means employed as susceptible of becoming a work of art.

Religious Art is possible only on condition that the religious interest is sufficiently strong to urge expression, and Art will become predominantly religious only when, as during the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, Religion is recognised as the supreme concern of man, while no rival interests of science, politics, social reform, or mere amusement, dispute its claim to be all-important in human life. But at the present time the world is not so unanimous as it was in the thirteenth or sixteenth century in recognising

this claim of Religion, unless we give to that term a meaning which it does not naturally bear. It cannot be said that modern society is united in any one single aim or in any one single belief. Modern life is confusedly impelled in this direction and that by a multitude of discordant interests and aspirations. Under these circumstances we need not expect that the arts of expression will devote themselves to any one of these rather than to the rest. There cannot be any single predominating type of art until in the progress of evolution some one aim or passion wins in the struggle for existence, disengages itself from the confusion, and absorbs all the rest. In the meantime Art will continue its present miscellaneous character—a character not without a special delight of its own. Perfectly free in the choice of its subjects and ideals, it will represent indifferently any one or any group of the multitudinous aspects of modern life.

But in considering these facts we must avoid the common mistake of drawing all our conclusions from the one art of Painting. We must not forget Music, and especially Literature. Architecture and Sculpture we may be excused for overlooking. The conditions of modern life are hostile to their growth. Communities and Churches are not sufficiently conscious of unity nor sufficiently assured of the future to encourage the impulse which creates new forms of Architecture and Sculpture to monumentalize their common life. We can now read the history of the

many ages of the past. History has caused modern society to recognize that it knows not what a day will bring forth and filled the mind of the modern man with a consciousness of impending change. This state of things is not favourable to the monumental arts. They seem to flourish best where there exists the consciousness of a continuous common life or of universal aims, as in ancient Egypt, or the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages.

But, as was remarked above, if we overlook the monumental arts, we must not forget Literature as a mode of expressing the inner life of the present day. There is such a thing as competition, even among the Arts. The apparent decay of one art may imply no general decay of the artistic impulse but only its gradual displacement by some other mode of expression. Here, as elsewhere, human nature acts along the line of least resistance, and if expression is easier and more effectual by one art rather than another, the result will be favourable to the first and unfavourable to the second. The splendid triumphs of Painting, Architecture, and Sculpture between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries are partly to be explained on the ground that they were in that period the most effectual means of expressing the great interests of the soul and of appealing with best hope of being understood to the widest circle of men.

To understand the strong inducement in the past

for great prophetic souls to devote themselves to Art, we must throw ourselves back in imagination to a time when, among keenly intelligent and receptive communities, books were scarce and few men could read. If a man had anything great to utter he found his readiest vehicle in the picture, and he might set to work with the assurance that the public would pay attention to his creations and understand their meaning. Such a state of things gave Painting a special attraction to great minds and offered the painter the strongest encouragement to put his very best into his work—an attraction and encouragement which were none the less real if they were not consciously felt as such. But they no longer exist in their ancient force. Ideas, teachings, appeals to the mind, heart, or conscience, if expressed through the medium of Literature, are more likely to fulfil their authors' intention than if conveyed by other forms of Art. Men see the world through books and everybody reads. Through books they may gain their impressions of God, Christ, Nature, and the heart of man. Books instruct the intellect, touch the heart, educate the conscience, stir the imagination, and compensate the mind for the dulness of the senses—many of which functions were once fulfilled or partly fulfilled by the painter's art. I do not imply that this is a change for the worse, but I state the fact as essential for the understanding of the relationship between modern art and the great interests of modern man.

Nor would I be understood as defining the contrast so sharply as to shut out the possibility of a Dante in the Middle Ages, or of a Watts, Holman Hunt, or Munkacsy at the present time. Yet Dante was apparently conscious of the very narrow audience to whom the Divine Comedy would appeal—a fact which may explain the little care he seems to have taken to ensure the preservation of his immortal work. Even Shakespeare's works would probably have been lost had it not been for the care of his friends, so little did this supreme artist realise how the book and not the stage was to be the means for appealing to mankind. And now that the conditions are reversed there is abundant evidence of a painful consciousness on the part of artists that they are not understood nor appreciated except by a small circle. They feel themselves to be speaking in an unknown tongue (Mr. Holman Hunt sends a printed explanation with one of his most poetical and religious creations). Such a feeling must form a serious discouragement to the expression of imaginative and spiritual truth by way of the representative arts. It must entail a certain lowering of painting to the sensational and commonplace. The absence of the spiritual element, however, from a modern gallery is not necessarily a sign of its total decay. Bearing in mind the marvellous facilities for expression in books, and the fact that the people not only *can* read but *do* read more and more every day, we must ascertain whether the spiritual element is to be found in

Literature before we declare its disappearance from Art altogether.

IV.

There is no space within the limits of this Essay to describe fully how the Poetry of modern England accurately reflects the soul of the times in its greatness as well as in its pettiness. Confining our instances to quite recent times, we may hear every note from doubt to faith, from mystic contemplation to pagan resolve to enjoy the pleasures of life.

We may regard the poetry of Wordsworth as completely expressing that mood of full spiritual insight towards which the rest, from Clough to Browning, slowly rise step by step. Wordsworth seems to prophesy the spirit which will ultimately disengage itself from the wrestling conflict of passions and opinions that rages round the world. To him Nature is personal, both as a whole and in all her members. This is a doctrine beyond proof. The truth of it will not be apparent until a long course of divine education has developed in man a temper which inevitably perceives it. In another form of Literature Mr. Ruskin has taught us a like mode of thought. To these teachers we owe an immense debt, in that they have led us to find an endless store of delight in the world through perception of its spiritual meaning.^f The religious value of Wordsworth's poetry lies less in its direct teachings than in its suggestiveness and in its power to summon the mood in which spiritual things become real. His greatest fault, however, is

a too evident desire to improve the occasion. It is a curious illustration of the modes in which the mind is deeply moved that those passages of his work in which the poet is most consciously didactic are just those which do us least good; whereas those which touch the soul most profoundly are the poems in which he speaks because he must speak, a necessity from beyond and above him prescribing a perfect form for his thought.

Regarding Wordsworth, therefore, as the poet who anticipates the goal to which the rest reach forward, the first step of progress to the goal is represented by Arthur Hugh Clough. Clough gives voice to a temper common enough in these days—a temper of scanty confidence and not rich either in peace or happiness. He shrinks from giving form to the intuitions of his spiritual nature. His utterance consequently appeals to a well-known and characteristic type of the modern man—a nature poor in impulse, in passion and in power, but reflective and (easy task!) capable of mastering and guiding itself. This is not an absolutely satisfying ideal. Passion and imagination are the steeds of the soul. Conscience is the charioteer. Duty is the road on which the car of life must be driven. Now, doubtless, the highest interests of the soul demand that the charioteer should hold the reins and do his office. But what if the steeds are a spiritless and feeble team—no Horses of the Sun, but mere mules and bullocks? The Greek ideal required strength and fire in the

steeds of the soul as well as mastership in the driver, the mediæval saint aimed by moral exertion, intensified, if need be, to agony and bloody sweat, to break the mettle of his team ; but the modern doctrine of clinging to duty, taking no account of the motive powers of life, caring not whether they be few or many, great or small, sometimes seems to pin its faith to the abstract possibility of controlling them.

Matthew Arnold marks a further stage of spiritual confidence. His intuitions are few and vague, but he does not shrink from defining them. He is the spokesman of those who run to and fro across the frontier between doubt and faith, not advancing far into the one realm, nor retreating far into the other, but ever hovering near the dividing line. The desire of their hearts is towards the spiritual, but they are chary of ventures and distrustful of self. There is distress in Clough : there is subtler distress in Arnold which is none the less keen for all this crying of "peace, peace." Both are exponents of the modern temper of worry in the soul, Clough uttering the cry of the less confident spiritual nature, Arnold of the more.

Browning, on the other hand, speaks the word of assurance. This is not the place to deal with the vexed question of Browning's merits as a literary artist or to express more than a passing doubt that this poet has marred much good matter by vicious form. All canons which pretend to define what Art

is and what Art is not, are, indeed, absurd; but it will be admitted that the truest poetry causes the thought and feeling of the poet to be at once the thought and feeling of the reader, and that to achieve this is true success in poetic art. For that reason it is sometimes hard to understand why Browning has chosen verse as the vehicle of his message, and the writer confesses to this thought even in regard to such noble teaching as that of "Christmas Eve" and "Easter Day." Be that as it may, Browning is the poet of religious assurance. In some minds reasoning precedes conviction. Not so in the mind of which Browning is the type. His poetry is indeed rich in the questions and answers, the introspections and explorations of the modern intellect engaged on religious matters. But the reflectiveness of Browning is the offspring of his faith, not its parent. His nature is rooted in the conviction of a personal God in communion with the soul and expressing Himself in the soul's motions. His speculation is not the painful search of one who is ignorant where truth is to be found. He is assured of solid ground by the very constitution of his soul, and in his furthest flight knows how to find his way home. We shall best understand the reflectiveness of Browning if we think of it as the healthy exercise of a healthy spirit, and not the effort of a wanderer to find his way.

I have chosen these instances, not from consideration of their greatness as poets (though they are great), but because they illustrate in a brief manner

the aim of this Essay, which is to show how Art gives expression to the inner life of individuals and generations. There are many others whose work would be richly suggestive of appropriate thoughts, but as my purpose is merely the illustration of a principle, further instances would be as much beyond the necessities of the case as they are beyond the space at my disposal. I pass on to consider, in conclusion, another type of Art in Literature, which must be regarded as one of the most important means of expression possessed by modern times. I refer to Fiction.

If the present century cannot be said to have discovered the novel, it has at least discovered its capacity for giving expression to real life. There seems to be no human interest, whether trivial or serious, which cannot be used as material for fiction and become by artistic treatment a means of informing the mind or modifying character by way of pleasurable interest. The novel is capable of giving form to all that concerns or pleases men, and to much that, without its means, could hardly be expressed at all. No Art, ancient or modern, has had such a versatile application and, be it remembered, we are only in the infancy of our knowledge concerning the uses to which fiction may be put. Its variety and richness are, of course, a prolific source of vast quantities of inferior work, but enough examples of the better sort exist to prove fiction susceptible of the utmost artistic refinement and of wielding an astonish-

ing power in moulding the thought of the time. The history of the novel forms, in some respects, a contrast to the history of other forms of Art. Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting were serious, ethical, or religious before they were light and trivial. Only in their later developments did they become means for ministering to the luxury of life. The earliest novels, on the contrary, were merely amusing or beguiling tales. Not until a comparatively late period did they begin to deal with ethical situations, social aims, and religious problems. The modern novel becomes more and more a means for portraying character, for exhibiting the conflict of moral forces, and the realisation of ideas in life. Its scenes are more frequently taken not from an imaginary past, as with Scott, but from the actual present in which we live. Its personalities are such as we know; its situations and problems those with which we ourselves have to deal. There is, indeed, no diminution in that species of fiction whose characters interest us solely for their own sake without reference to anything beyond. But a newer style has arisen, exemplified in "Adam Bede" on the one hand and in "Robert Elsmere" on the other, the actors in which interest us not merely as studies of character, but with reference to great moral and religious problems in the life of the times.

This type of fiction must be reckoned among the great spiritual instruments of the century—a no less potent means of influencing thought and moulding

character than the Drama of the Greeks or the plastic arts of the Middle Ages. Indeed, when one remembers the changed condition of modern life, it is plain that a novel which attracts public attention may wield a wider influence than any other form of artistic expression. At the present day the moral responsibilities of authors, especially of novelists, are enormous. An English writer in the last century had around him a public of some eight millions, half of whom could not read. His audience in England alone has now increased to far vaster numbers, most of whom can understand what he says and all of whom, by means of improved communication, have been brought within hearing of his voice. When we remember that this vast assemblage is a novel-reading public, and that the novel has proved its capacity as a vehicle of teaching, we realise what a splendid and unprecedented opportunity awaits the gifted novelist for moulding the thought and feeling of the age. And, on the other hand, there can be little doubt that the consciousness of vast surrounding oceans of human life, more or less capable of being coloured by the literary artist's own personality, will in turn exercise a modifying influence on literature, and on fiction as a part of literature, giving it new and larger aims, and, let us hope, a sense of deepened responsibility. Already in Walt Whitman the English-speaking race has a writer to whose utterance this consciousness of a big seething world of humanity has given a most striking colour.

It has been said that the development of portrait-painting during the Renaissance, becoming in the great masters one of the most amazing of Art's perfections, is the counterpart to the quickened interest in human personality which spread over Europe when she awoke from her long intellectual sleep. A similar remark might, *mutatis mutandis*, be applied to the modern novel as a means of expression for the study of character. The modern novel is one, among a thousand pregnant proofs, that there never was a time when man took such a deep, sincere interest in man as at the present day. One cannot withhold a measure of sympathy from Mr. Oscar Wilde when he declares his whole-hearted love of the methods of science, but finds a certain triviality in the matter of which science treats. Undoubtedly the ultimately important thing is the personality of man. That its importance is felt by the modern spirit is abundantly witnessed by the aims and methods of modern fiction.

In Dickens and Thackeray character is treated for its own sake and for the sake of the situations to which it gives rise. Without, as I believe, any deliberate adoption of a moral aim, both these writers have been important factors in forming the moral temper of the age. Thackeray teaches us our own weaknesses, helps us to see ourselves as others see us, and by introducing an element of humour into our self-criticism, does more than most moralists do towards making us wise. As to Dickens, no one can

understand the history of England during this century, especially in the direction of social reform, without taking account of the part his writings have played in the formation of the character of the time. Great as the influence of Carlyle has been in quickening our sense of social duty, it is my impression that the influence of Dickens has been a stronger force in urging men to deal justly by their neighbours. Dickens has softened the heart of England. His writings have been the greatest mediators between class and class that this age has seen.

Of fiction as a study of character with reference to ideas and moral forces beyond itself, the chief instance is given by George Eliot. It is quite true that the characters of George Eliot are intensely interesting to us as individuals. But the chief of them carry an added interest in that they are suggestive of the universal moral problems of civilised man. George Eliot has caused us to intimately realise the weight of the question, "Is man master of himself?" "Are the results of inborn character inevitable?" "Can man save his soul by effacing himself?" These are questions which she suggests but does not answer, and, perhaps, as an artist, it was not her function to do so. But to make the modern man feel his problems is to do him a service. 5

Another and more modern instance of a cognate type of fiction is afforded by Mrs. Humphrey Ward's "Robert Elsmere." Mrs. Ward has certainly won a great conquest for fiction in making it a vehicle for

the treatment of modern religious difficulties as they grow out of character. The fact that she has succeeded in producing a novel whose motive is the religious problem of the times goes far towards convincing us that fiction is, or is destined soon to become, the leading art of expression. There are those who deny that such an attempt can be legitimately designated by the name of Art, but such denial invariably greets those who reject old methods and old subjects and bring new interests within the scope of their craft. Doubtless, when Giotto began to study Nature as a guide in painting, and thus showed the way by which his successors won their splendid triumphs, there were not wanting sticklers for the wooden methods of the old Byzantine School, who cried out upon him, "This is not Art!" The present writer, however, feels no hesitation in referring to Mrs. Ward's courageous enterprise in an Essay which deals with Religion and Art. It has been one of the most widely read novels of our time, and having regard to the immense power of the novel as an instrument of teaching, it is matter to us of deep satisfaction and hope that the solution developed practically accords with the principle in the light of which the contributors to this volume regard the great problems of human life.

This novel will afford for future times a valuable aid towards filling out the record of the moral and religious condition of England at the close of the present century. It appears to me, how-

ever, that in Langham rather than in Robert Elsmere himself Mrs. Ward has drawn a typical embodiment of the spirit of the present day. The self-critical spirit, questioning every impulse and ideal, and then recoiling upon itself to criticise its own criticisms and become keenly conscious of its deep-ingrained mental habit—this spirit is more characteristic of the modern temper than the strong and fervid religious nature seeking to get its intuitions into form. Moreover, I confess to feeling that Robert Elsmere, though the religious problem centres in him, is not the most clearly defined nor the most impressive personality of the book. Nor does the type of religion represented by Elsmere's final position impress the reader as being so dominant a force over character and life as do some of the other types of religion depicted in the book. True, his Theism associates itself with a life of devoted service to humanity. But for all that the religion of Elsmere not only differs in specific beliefs from that of, say, Catherine and Newcome, but it appears to occupy a different and, I would add, a less important place in life. The religious beliefs of Elsmere are the product of his character. The character of Catherine is the product of her religious beliefs. In Elsmere, character is first, religion second. In Catherine, religion is first, character second. Elsmere's religion is the natural flower into which a deep, large, strong nature needs must finally blossom. Catherine's religion, on the other

hand, is not rooted in character; it is a somewhat outside the soul which dominates her being, disciplines her will and moulds her to itself. Mrs. Ward may, indeed, have caused us to feel that this religion of Catherine's is a mere survival and an impossibility to the modern mind, but in her presentation it certainly appears to us a more potent force in Catherine's life than Elsmere's (final) religion is in his. Elsmere devotes himself to the human brotherhood; what causes him to do so, however, is not his Theism, but his *disposition*. His life of service in the slums of London would be quite intelligible *in a man of his nature* apart from his hold of theistic beliefs. Mrs. Ward's treatment of the situation does not suggest that such beliefs would of *themselves* determine a man otherwise poor in sympathy to a life of self-surrender for the social good. To cause us to feel this it would be necessary to exhibit the growth of "pure Theism" in a character hitherto selfish and hard, and to show that the change of belief involved a corresponding change to unselfishness and wise enthusiasm for the good of the race.

In conclusion, it is only necessary to re-state the point of view from which these remarks are made. Far from attempting an exhaustive treatment of "Religion and Art," the writer has sought to exhibit only such aspects of the subject as may be of special interest to those who stand for faith unfettered by authority. On account of our position Art has a

peculiar significance for us in the realm of Religion. And, I would add, Art has on the same account a peculiar significance for us in the realm of Morals. The possibilities of Love and Righteousness yet to be realised by man are infinite. To believe in these and devote life to their realisation, rather than to the retention of past ideals, is the unique privilege of our freedom. And here it is that Art supplies us with a helpful analogy. From formless and chaotic matter the skill of the artist, guided by inherited wisdom and disciplined by long-continued and devoted exercise, evokes at last a perfect form—a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. It is thus, also, that men build up the dignity of human character from the raw material of animal passion and impulse. The application of moral ideas to life, the process by which character is formed and animated with great purposes and noble passions; all this—which is the task of every man—demands an imagination as fervid, a skill as refined, a will as trained and devoted as that which creates a Greek god out of marble or evokes the Passion Music from orderless vibrations of air. Thus it is that the study of the conditions of artistic production is also in the deepest sense a study of life.

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IX.

MODERN RELIGIOUS
DEVELOPMENTS.

BY WILLIAM GEORGE TARRANT, B.A.

THE century now nearing to its close opened upon a world clearly destined to undergo rapid change. The political revolution in France was accompanied by a general upheaval in thought, which, as it had in some degree led up to the memorable events of that period, also survived the earlier political changes which ensued. It might be said that the same mental revolution is, indeed, still in progress, were it not that the shock of surprise with which its leaders found themselves breaking with a past so long held venerable has yielded to a sense of accustomed freedom; and many of the younger minds of the age are too sensible of their responsibilities as builders to give themselves up to the fascinating but dangerous delights of merely breaking down. As "Free Thought" is no longer so novel, so also it does not appear so much like an end in itself as it appeared to our grandfathers. Our think-

ing may possibly miss some of the nascent energy which is manifested in the pages of writers of the first revolutionary period, but on the other hand it may be confidently asserted, that there are steadily accumulating results of observation and study which were beyond the grasp of our predecessors. They struggled to be free; their successors have entered into possession of freedom. It is no longer a question among thinking people as to whether a man has the right to think for himself. The air is filled with appeals to private judgment, appeals made alike by Jesuits, Ritualists, Evangelicals, and Broad Churchmen. Indeed, it may be set down as one of the least disputable developments of the age, that the rule dividing between truths suitable to the scholar's study and truths suitable to the street corner is obsolete. The lay mind no longer exists, or is on the road to speedy extinction. Even the arcana of medicine are thrown open to the public, and the old-fashioned fictions of professionalism are hard to keep up. In regard to religious thought this change is even more conspicuous. The "Seat of Authority" is not to be found in priest or synod. Everyone who can read is invited to the discussion of subjects the most solemn; and not a few of our more gifted writers appear the less disposed to take part in such discussions, as they witness the crowd of would-be disputants who have little besides their enthusiasm and goodwill to recommend them for a hearing.

The outcome of this concession to hear, speak,

and write freely on all subjects, almost without exception, is a bewildering mass of literature which every month goes to swell. It is not easy even when aided by the verdict of popular fame to assure ourselves that we have really discerned the most important and influential authors of our own day; and the occasional reversals of contemporary judgments, the oblivion that quickly falls around some once favourite authors, and the slow growth to abiding recognition which sometimes rewards a writer neglected in his own day, warn us that our estimate of the writings of our contemporaries is open to much subsequent revision. I proceed, therefore, to my task of forming such an estimate, not unmindful of the failures of many who have imagined for others, or have promised themselves, monuments more enduring than brass.

Another consideration suggests the propriety of moderation in our forecast. The area within which we shall look for developments is, whether as regards time or population, a very narrow one. Fifty years of Europe may count for more than a cycle of Cathay, and yet not for quite so much as our own sanguine wishes would anticipate. And it is chiefly to one corner of Europe that our attention must be confined, for the countries of the north-west must be looked upon, with their offspring in the United States or America, as comprising the most considerable section of the world's thinkers. Yet what deep underlying age-movements are operating be-

neath us, in the half-conscious life of the dumb masses of men we cannot guess. Whether the ultimate goal will be a state of self-regulated order or of a political and religious popedom, only feebly represented by the spiritual monarch of Rome in the Middle Ages, is still undecided. Those to whom liberty is dear will take heart from every sign of progress towards the complete emancipation of minds from ignorance, superstition, and sacerdotalism. I hope to adduce in the following pages many and undeniable signs of such a progress.

Two prime disturbing elements have entered into the mental life of modern times. They relate to the facts of the world's history, including the development of man, and to the history of religion as exhibited in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. They may be conveniently indicated by the terms *Science* and *Criticism*. Allowing for the inclusion under these heads of a good deal which will not bear rigid examination, it must be conceded that each has had great and legitimate effect on religious thought. How great that effect has already been can be best appreciated by those who have studied the theological literature of fifty years ago and compare it with the literature which has replaced it. And it cannot be denied that some change has been rendered necessary, unless we take up the position that a full and perfectly accurate revelation of the truth respecting the history of the world and of man had been already placed at our disposal. Such a position

must appear on examination to be quite untenable. The discoveries which have been made in physics and biology are no less new and opposed to the bases of the old theology than those respecting the composition of the Biblical documents. And were we able to avoid as dangerous the discussion of doubtful results of Criticism, we must, as reasonable men, take cognizance of the light thrown upon the processes of nature by the studies of astronomy and geology.

It is said that all that is necessary to salvation has been revealed in the Bible, and that the existence of debatable matter in its writings does not imperil the precious treasure contained in the earthen vessels. But as soon as any concession is made in this direction it is impossible not to feel that the old security is gone. Where, we ask, are the limits of the debatable element? To what extent does it affect the central doctrines of theology? The settlement of these and similar questions may be in favour of one particular theology or another; but the fact that they are asked, and must be answered, prevents any theology from being precisely what it was before the new analysis set in. As a matter of fact, we see that there are but few writers of eminence who attempt to hold the ancient positions of theology exactly as their predecessors did. If a Calvin or a Whitgift came back to question their modern representatives the answer would be of the nature of a *tu quoque*. "You," the modern apologists

would say, "strove to meet the new thought of your "day with new developments of doctrine and "practice. We do the same." Even the defenders of the faith once delivered to the saints must bear witness to the rightfulness of change, and their bold defiance on one part of the field covers a silent surrender of another.

It will be convenient to give in a brief form so much of the history of Modern Science and of Biblical Criticism as shall fairly illustrate the need for the revision of religious doctrines. And since the former subject is of widest application, affecting as it does all our conceptions of the world in the past and in the present, nothing can be more desirable than that the reader should acquaint himself adequately with its more important results. In doing so it will become evident to the candid student of history that many aspects of modern life were anticipated by speculative thinkers of the past. With respect to the great doctrine of Evolution, which plays so important a part in the world of thought to-day, it would be a mistake to overlook the many foreshadowings by which it was ushered into its present prominence. The problem of the rise of the forms of life now peopling the earth led, as is well known, to many guesses, ingenious or grotesque, at the methods of creation. Although the story of Genesis was still enforced by authority, there were not wanting many inquiring minds in the 18th Century to whom this problem presented itself with

irresistible fascination. Into the details of the various theories put forth prior to the beginning of this century we need not go here ; such theories were known to comparatively few, and their propounders were popularly regarded with grave suspicion, if not treated with open denunciation.

* Toward the close of last century, however, the growth of observation in the field of natural history which accompanied the expansion of geographical knowledge led to the systematising of species in a manner unknown in any past age. Among the most noted in this branch of science was Baron Cuvier (1769-1832) whose attention was firmly rivetted to the *differences* between species, and who was thus led to champion the view that each was, from the first, a distinct work of creative power. The contrary theory, which had set forth a conception of one regular series of species, rising, so to speak, by slight gradations from the lowest to the highest, was clearly the more untenable, as progress was made in grouping species into natural orders and according to definite types. Yet Cuvier, while supporting and supported by traditional authorities, was opposed by several scientists, the most conspicuous of them being Lamarck (1744-1829), who, dominated by the conception of living things as forming one great division, apart from all the rest, of natural objects, was persuaded that the underlying *unity* which linked them together was of more significance than the marks by which each was distinguished from the rest. That Lamarck believed

in the development of life from non-living materials was doubtless due to the captivating suggestion of an unbroken continuity through all phases of existing things. The idea of spontaneous generation has kept possession of many later minds, but up to the present the most vigorous experiments have failed to produce a single instance of life developed from sterilised matter. It is due, however, to the memory of this great thinker to observe that, while he avoided the mistake of earlier evolutionists in supposing an ascent could be traced in one single line through the whole list of animated beings, he adhered to the thought of continuous development from one species to another, and substantially anticipated the theory of ascent through diverging lines from a primordial type which is popularly associated with the name of Charles Darwin (1809-1882).

It is well-known that Darwin was not alone in his own generation as a worker in this direction. Mr. A. R. Wallace (still living) shares with him the honour of having so far securely based the theory of the evolution of species that no recognisable attempt has been made since 1859, when Darwin's *Origin of Species* appeared, to overthrow it as a whole, and to revert to the traditional hypothesis of special creation. Criticism has not been wanting, and, while some modifications have been enforced, additions have been made to the views established by Darwin; but in face of the acceptance given by experts to

those views in general, the efforts of criticism from the theological side have been directed chiefly to show the need of still interpreting the facts of natural history by the aid of the conception of a presiding selective Intelligence, or by adjusting the succession of species as revealed by geological study to the statements of the first chapter of Genesis.

Concurrently with the progress of the doctrine of evolution in biological science, there has been a great advance towards establishing the theory of evolution with regard to the earth, and, indeed, to all those parts of the universe which come within the range of scientific observation. As long ago as 1796 Laplace had suggested his well-known "Nebular Theory" of the origin of the solar system, which, it was at once seen, would, if tenable, tend to considerably modify the traditional teachings of the churches. The later physics and astronomy have so far aided us with illustrative facts that it is as impossible to separate the "creation" of the sun and moon from that of the earth, as to oppose successfully the development of the horse from its five-toed progenitor after studying the works of Prof. Huxley. The results of chemical experiment have, indeed, abolished the wild dreams of transmutation, and the elementary forms of matter with which this branch of science has acquainted us, appear in their present stage to be as completely severed as do the existing species of living creatures. On the other hand the observations

of the spectroscope have demonstrated, as far as this can be done, that many of these elementary forms are also present in the sun, as well as in more distant orbs; and thus we seem to be nearing the scientific justification of the poet's vision of the "One Element," which, throughout the universe, underlies all existing differences. The "One Law;" of which Tennyson also speaks, is already brought within reasonable contemplation; for the researches of Faraday (1791-1867), and Prof. Tyndall and many other physicists have proved that the various forms of force are only capable of temporary isolation; they tend to run into one another, and when apparently extinguished are found to have reappeared under another aspect.

Along with the discovery that all forms of force are different operations of the same thing, must be placed the fact that observation has found no evidence for believing in the variability of the order and connection in which those operations occur. The "law," that is, the observed connection between a cause and its effect, appears absolutely uniform; and though such a statement says nothing as to the possibility of the introduction of a novel "force" at any point in the chain of events, the unmistakable result of modern study has been to heighten the difficulty felt by the more thoughtful of the past when asked to give evidence to stories of the miraculous. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that a new philosophy has been born, the

representatives of which are Mr. Herbert Spencer and Prof. Haeckel. The English writer has endeavoured to recast the story of existence in accordance with the ideas of gradual development, illustrated in the case of biological forms and more than suggested by the results of physical science; and in so doing he has very properly, but with tremendous significance to theology, included the rise not only of the human race along with other living forms upon the earth, but also of the various institutions of human society to the conceptions of religion. That so colossal a work is not satisfactory in all its details is not to be wondered at. The problem of life is so many-sided that he would be superhuman who should see it all round with equal clearness, but as far as contemporaries can judge, Mr. Spencer has made an indelible mark upon philosophic history; and it will long continue to be the task of those who differ in important conclusions from Mr. Spencer to sift the history of religion by the use of the principles of development which he has shown to be applicable to so large a proportion of life's story.

One other branch of modern study calls for special mention here; for though it forms one of a group of studies connected with anthropology in the wider sense, it has been of singular importance with regard to the advances in Biblical Criticism, to which I shall presently invite attention. It relates to the discovery and investigation by Western Europe of

the various documents of other than Jewish and Christian origin. If the term "discovery" appears too strong in the light of the fact that for many years the Koran had been known by scholars, and the existence of the Chinese sacred literature had been long attested by travellers, we have to remember that not only was this knowledge very meagre at the best, and limited to a very narrow circle of experts, but that even among them it was held subject to the pressure of a long-standing prejudice, which is not yet wholly removed.

The prepossession in favour of the Sacred Books of Judaism and Christianity owes not a little of its strength to the habits of centuries, and it is difficult to approach them with the same open mind as when we peruse the writings of Confucius and his followers. On the one hand, if attracted by the contents of the Bible, we may sign to them a higher worth than they really possess; on the other, if repelled, we may owe the greater part of our disgust, not to utterances of the Biblical writers themselves, but to the extravagant claims which have been made for them by zealous defenders of the faith. A wholesome correction in every way has been supplied in the study of the sacred literature of other races, such for instance as the Chinese, the Vedic, and the Persian, as well as the more sympathetic reading of the works of the classic writers of Greece and Rome, and a more patient examination of the principles of forms of religion hitherto banned as "heathen" and "idolatrous."

The discovery (at the close of last century) of the Rosetta stone, now in the British Museum, supplied the long-sought key to the decipherment of a vast Egyptian literature of the greatest importance to students of religion; and the abundant Assyrian and Babylonish inscriptions discovered within recent years have yielded to the ingenious students of the cuneiform characters many a record shedding light upon the growth of Jewish conceptions, as well as upon the history given from Israel's point of view in the Old Testament. All this material of what we may call the higher stratum of religious history has been amply supplemented by studies in the mythology of less prominent races, and the bases have been laid for a world-wide comparison of religious ideas. In such a comparison Judaism and Christianity necessarily take their place; and whatever the final verdict of the student may be as to the relative worth of their special ideas, he cannot fail to recognise surprising resemblances in symbol and ritual, as well as suggestive approximations on points of higher importance—such as duty and the future life—which these studies reveal.

But if the advance of Science in the direction of a well-evidenced theory of the development both of the physical world and of human society has been such as to call for a revision of the hitherto accepted teachings of the Bible, that collection of writings has itself been the scene of no less significant labours of students. The peculiarly intimate relation in which

the Bible stands to current theology has rendered the effect of Biblical Criticism even more acutely felt than the observations and arguments of scientific men. For it must be conceded that while the general atmosphere of thought is in a manner charged with great ideas, which, in spite of being but vaguely apprehended by the mass of minds, have a share in moulding their religious conceptions, the Bible is for most religious people about us the unique source of spiritual instruction. It is possible to refuse with Galileo's ecclesiastic to look through the telescope which promises a disturbing glimpse at Jupiter's satellites, but when the Scriptures are attacked, hallowed as they are, not merely by the declarations of Councils, but by the use of many generations, it is impossible to affect indifference.

Happily for the cause of a living and enlightened piety, the minds of teachers in all the churches have been startled into fresh thought by the suggestions, some of which have proved exceedingly persistent, made by the great scholars of our time. As in the case of the doctrine of evolution, some of these suggestions were made long ago. Difficulties and doubts insinuated themselves wherever an intelligent mind investigated the Scriptures freely; but as far as the public mind was concerned, it was till a generation or two ago something more than venturesome to moot such difficulties in open debate. By the close of last century, however, under the influence of the mental

upheaval to which reference has been made, it was boldly asserted that whatever intrinsic value might attach to the ideas represented in the Bible, it must suffer itself to be as candidly and impartially handled as any other human writings. It would take too long to trace here the many stages by which, having once claimed this freedom of inquiry, the critics have passed from one theory to another respecting the order, contents, and comparative authority of the Scriptures. That many competing theories have been advanced will not excite wonder except among those thinkers to whom the desire to remain undisturbed in their old traditions provokes the tendency to exaggerate every difference among their disturbers into a victory for their own side. As a matter of fact, while these differences have been very serious, they are not more so than the varieties of theological systems which have been founded ostensibly on the same basis; and, what is of much greater significance, the current of thought shows such settled determination in one or two well-defined directions, as already to have carried many along with it who set out to withstand it altogether.

The character of modern Biblical Criticism and its special significance with regard to the development of religious thought, may be most conveniently exhibited by sketching very briefly the history of the leading works upon the subject. Discussion has not been confined to any one section of the Scriptures, but ranges over all. With regard to the

New Testament, it is due to Griesbach (1745-1812) that by the apt word "Synoptic," the long-recognised distinction between the first three gospels and the fourth is brought vividly into popular remembrance. The efforts of students have been incessantly directed towards ascertaining, if possible, whence the "similarity of view" indicated by this epithet is derived. It has been suggested that (a) common oral tradition underlies them all, or (b) that the Evangelists used a common document, or documents, or (c) that, one or other being first written, the others were based partly upon the earliest in the field. As to which was first written much variety of opinion has been held, the prevailing tendency at present being to maintain the priority of Mark, and the successive production in order of Matthew and Luke.

The Gospel of John has been even more passionately discussed. With Luther many a believer has felt the special spiritual suggestiveness of this Gospel, and would be prepared to surrender the Synoptics to the critics if only he might depend upon this document as a veritable production of an eye-witness of the life of Jesus. Hotly as the discussion upon this point has been waged, there is yet much uncertainty in coming to a conclusion. The objections of those who have pointed out its artificial air, its unmistakable disagreements with the other Gospels, the difference between its style and conceptions and those of the Apocalypse also attributed to John, have been parried

by appeals to the acceptance of so many centuries, the possibility that the Synoptic tradition was an inferior one, the testimony of the 2nd century in favour of the work, the absence of any charge of spurious introduction at that date, and other arguments familiar to the Biblical student. While a determined stand for the traditional view has been made in this country, under the authority of so great a scholar as the late Dr. Lightfoot (Bishop of Durham), and other eminent writers, it is remarkable that on the Continent former champions of the Johannine authorship (such as Reuss, Weizsäcker, and Hase), have shown an inclination under the pressure of criticism to attribute the writing of the Gospel to a younger disciple, and not to the apostle himself.

As the Gospels have been debated not without effect, so the Epistles and other New Testament writings have been brought under close examination. Indeed, in the case of F. C. Baur (1792-1860), the celebrated Tübingen professor, whose theory of conflicting parties in the Primitive Church has had, on the whole, an abiding effect in the formation of our conception of that period, it was the study of the Epistles that revealed to him the sharp antithesis between Paul and his opponents, which serves as the keynote of his criticism. Opinions have been widely divided as to the propriety of ascribing any but Romans, the Corinthian letters, and Galatians to Paul, and, if the list is to be

extended, as to how far we are justified in following tradition. But the details of these debates would be out of place here. It must suffice to say that the occurrence of the debates themselves has been of great consequence to the course of religious thought; and as it is impossible that they will terminate in a general assent to the long-established theory of orthodoxy respecting the authority of the New Testament as a whole (and no other termination would satisfy the theology of the creeds), the continuance of these discussions may still be looked for with ever-deepening results in the minds of reflective people.

The heat of debate is perhaps less intense with regard to the Old Testament; at any rate the concessions which have been made to the critics are already of a substantial character. When Wilhelm Vatke, in 1837, promulgated in an unfortunate book the view that the Levitical Ritual was a late development in the history of the Hebrew religion, he met with scant attention. The mind of students was absorbed by other problems, and the brilliance of Strauss's *Leben Jesu*, which first appeared in the same year, totally eclipsed the light he offered upon the subject. In subsequent years the labours of Reuss, Graff, Colenso, Kuenen, and Wellhausen, to name only a few of the more eminent workers in this field of study, have resulted in establishing several highly significant conclusions beyond dispute. The composite character of the Hexateuch (*i.e.* the five

books "of Moses" together with the book of Joshua; the existence of different traditions in the historical books; and the presence of evident "motives" on the part of the narrators here and there, with the effect of impairing the absolutely historical character of the narratives; are all points which are not now often disputed by responsible writers on the subject, no matter to what school they belong. The same analytic process has been applied to the remaining writings, with the effect of seriously undermining many opinions hitherto held as undeniable in orthodox circles. The late date of many of the Psalms; the combination of various "oracles" under the names of this or the other prophet; the bold use of Daniel's name by the Maccabean writer of the apocalyptic dreams in that book; are further examples of the "results" which may be claimed with certainty by the new Criticism. To fairly appreciate the character and significance of these results, no better recommendation can be made than that the reader should examine the articles on Biblical subjects first in the eighth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1853-1860), and then in the ninth edition (1875-1888). The editor of the ninth edition, Prof. W. Robertson Smith, has been blamed for his temerity in leaning to the aid of writers of such "advanced" views, but the rapidly changing attitude of many religious teachers on this and cognate subjects is an ample justification of his course. The dangerous views of yesterday are the commonplaces of to-day.

From even so brief a sketch as the foregoing, it may be seen that the ground has been well prepared for the re-presentation of the history of Judaism and of the first generations of Christendom. New facts have been collected and old facts have been set in a new light. Among the inevitable results of this growth and change of material must be included a new view of the development of religion among the Jews. Prof. Kuenen has endeavoured to trace that development in a work (*Religion of Israel*, 1869-70) which must modify the hitherto accepted opinions. Instead of a history of perpetually-recurring lapses from a religion originally revealed in all its perfection, we are led to contemplate the rude beginnings of a faith which progressed from a lowly stage by a very gradual ascent, in its course taking on one feature and another, now Egyptian, now Canaanitish, now Persian, now Hellenic, and answering in all respects except, no doubt, that of the intensity of its piety, to the natural growth of religion elsewhere. In regard to primitive Christianity, the analysis of the school represented by Baur has led to a very minute study of the second century and the close of the first; with this result, among others, that, as shown by Dr. Hatch (Bampton Lectures, 1881, and Hibbert Lectures, 1888) the primitive practices of Christians are found to have been closely allied to those current among the population surrounding them. In respect to many points, therefore, the feeling has been growing that Judaism and Christianity

cannot be severed from the common story of humanity.

In various popular works the attempt has been made to so present the story of the life and times of Jesus especially, as to enable the nineteenth century reader, beset as he is with doubts which reach their climax when the miraculous is introduced, to conceive that story in a way not unnatural, however impressive. There is probably no work so influential in this way as M. Renan's *Vie de Jésus* (1863), which has been very widely read by the humblest classes of religious inquirers in many countries. Other so-called "Lives" of Jesus have been written by eminent writers, and however they differ in regard to the critical acumen of their authors, they agree in emphasising the human aspect of the gospel story. Account has also to be taken of the effect of other forms of literature than those so professedly critical, as, *e.g.*, the valuable series of Hibbert Lectures, the writings of Matthew Arnold, and, later, the Gifford Lectures, which have done much to stimulate thought upon many sides of the religious problem. There has been a remarkable tendency in this country to issue Biblical manuals for popular use, a tendency which received a fresh impetus on the appearance of the Revised New Testament in 1881. The fact that revision was undertaken drew the attention of many minds to the human element in revelation, and though the Revised Bible (completed 1885) has not ousted the Authorised English Version from use in the Established Church,

it is becoming generally recognised as a more faithful translation. The presence of two accredited translations before the English reader is in itself provocative of further inquiry ; and " Introductions " abound in which he will find a modicum at least of the new learning. Even the novel is pressed into the service of criticism, and the remarkable success of Mrs. Humphrey Ward's *Robert Elsmere* (1888) bore witness to the wide interest which has been caused by these discussions, which it skilfully presents to an audience not usually secured either by commentaries or lectures.

And what of the progress of religious thought among the churches ? Are they just as they were in all essentials ? Outwardly they present but few signs of change. The great Catholic Church has been led under Jesuit influence to crown the glorification of the Virgin Mary, by elevating the doctrine of her Immaculate Conception into a dogma essential to the true belief, and to declare in the face of history that the Pope when enunciating matters of faith is absolutely infallible. The Ecumenical Council of 1870, which met for the promulgation of this latter doctrine, was the occasion of the revolt of a group of thoughtful divines, who, headed by the late Dr. Dollinger, constituted a new party, calling themselves the " Old Catholics." Beyond helping some English churchmen to renew their attacks on the usurpations of the Roman prelate, and so to intensify their belief in their own

"Catholicity," this latest schism has had little influence in this country.

The English Prayer-book is unrevised, and the reading of the Scripture goes on day by day in our Cathedrals as if never a doubt had suggested itself. The Creeds remain unaltered, but who shall say the beliefs of men are the same? If we were not informed by the past history of the Church as to the elasticity of any and every formula, the times in which we live would speedily enlighten us. As soon as we look behind the unchanged banners of the faith into the faces of the church militant we observe with what dexterity our contemporaries are seeking to change their front of battle. The sermons delivered out of the living hearts of men count for more in reality than the dogmas they recite in obedience to an ancient rule. And from the time when the Broad Church, under the leadership of teachers like Dr. Arnold, F. D. Maurice, Charles Kingsley, and Dean Stanley, made its protest alike against the unsympathetic Evangelicalism of one section of the Church and the priestly assumptions of the other, there has been a growing disposition to imitate their tone of catholicity, even where their interpretations of doctrine have been opposed. The publication of *Essays and Reviews* (1860) led, indeed, to a trial which was not likely to engender kindly feelings, but when it resulted in the enunciation by high legal authorities of principles regarding subscription to the

Articles which left the meaning of that action studiously vague, an impression appears to have been made upon Anglicans that the less they attempt to prosecute heresy the better. Subsequent ecclesiastical trials have taken place, but with very rare exceptions they have turned on points of ceremony—points not without doctrinal significance, it is true, but relating less obviously to faith than to practice.

The prosecution of a Bishop last year for contravening the rubrics in the matter of the celebration of the Eucharist is significant in the illustration it affords of the sense of a growing sacerdotalism which is one of the features of the modern Anglican system. This tendency was greatly fostered by the strenuous efforts made by the Oxford school of fifty or sixty years ago to combat the rising liberalism of the times. J. H. Newman (1801-1890), afterwards Cardinal, was one of the foremost leaders in reasserting the claims of the Church in regard to authority over matters of faith and practice. His conversion to the Romish communion was one of many which not unnaturally followed the enunciation of principles so completely in unison with the pretensions of Catholicism; and though the modern Ritualistic party avow their hostility to certain features in Romanism, they have been credited with leading many by easy stages into surrender to that system.

The effect which the Oxford movement has had in

directing attention to the symbolic side of the Church's ritual, and the popularity of some of the later Ritualists as preachers, have assuredly to be taken into account among the signs of the times. The question suggests itself whether the most living section of the Anglican Church is not committed to a further progress in the direction of that stronghold of the Roman system—sheer priestly assumption. The baseless character of the assumption counts for little where the emotional side of human nature is not held in check by enlightened reason. It would seem as if those who inherit the dignities of the Church were fully aware that the principles of Protestantism and the rights of free inquiry must always result in a turning away from every fixed standard and towards new aspects of truth. To them the possibility of the new truth being any other than a fresh view of the old is apparently inconceivable, and therefore we are presented in *Lux Mundi* (1890) with a remarkable manifesto presenting ancient dogmas in as modern a guise as the case admits. Apparently the case with regard to the question of the inspiration of the Bible admits of the maximum latitude; and Professor Gore, the editor of the volume and author of the essay on this subject, is prepared to admit many of the results alluded to above as accruing from recent Biblical criticism. How far he is right in assuming that sound orthodoxy admits of this latitude may be judged from the fate which

befel his almost solitary opponent at the recent meeting of Convocation (March, 1891). Archdeacon Denison, of Taunton, having moved that notice be taken of the dangerous errors advanced by Mr. Gore, it was decided that no such animadversion should be made. Indeed, how could the Bishops censure one Oxford teacher for printing what half-a-score of the best authorities in the University would be foremost in defending, and for echoing with a Ritualist's accent what was read unchallenged at the Church Congress of 1888 by such responsible writers as Dr. Cheyne, Dean (now Bishop) Perowne, and the Rev. J. M. Wilson, of Clifton College, and reproduced in the boldest tones in the leading periodicals of the day? It is clear that, though the "form of sound knowledge" in the shape of the creeds still receives the assent of the lip, the heart has been deeply affected by the influences amid which the modern student lives. When, if ever, those in the Church, who are sensible of Robert Elsmere's difficulties, will follow his example and go out, as one did of old, "not knowing whither "he went," cannot be guessed. How much longer will those who do not scruple to avow their assent to the conclusions of the advanced criticism, and who are unable to maintain the obsolete teaching of a Paradisaic Adam and a miraculous revelation, wait for the repeal of the Act of Uniformity, so that their utterances in the pulpit shall not flatly contradict the implications of the rest of their services?

It is with a sense of some relief that we turn to the aspect of religious thought represented by the Free Churches of this country and America. With respect to the application of the term "Free," the reader is aware that it covers a variety of degrees; but in general in proportion as a religious community recognises its comparatively recent origin, it is less weighted by shackles, which, when borne down by the authority of a thousand years, seem well-nigh irremovable. In Scotland, for example, where a 17th century Confession of Faith, curiously and painfully elaborate, is ostensibly received as the standard of orthodoxy, there is a spirit of independent thought manifesting itself in the outspoken utterances of men in responsible positions (*e.g.*, in the volume of *Scotch Sermons*, 1880), and finding vent in proposals for revision. So far has the latter movement proceeded in the American Presbyterian Church, that an organised effort has been made to secure the reconsideration by the Assembly of the old definitions in the light of modern science, Biblical research, and more humane conceptions. It would appear that before long there must be a wide-spread avowal of dissent from the harsh Calvinism which has so long influenced the Presbyterian Church, and the probability is that the dissenters will prove so far in excess of the upholders of the ancient notions that they will seek some method of declaring the constitution altered, and remain in possession of the seats of power. A process of the kind has already

taken place in regard to some of the leading minds among the English Nonconformists. According to a well-known authority, there is a section of them large enough to excite mournful feelings in those who stand by the tradition of the elders, which is upon the "down-grade" leading to Unitarianism. This is only Mr. Spurgeon's way of stating what will not appear a subject for lament, if we regard the process of change as one leading to greater adaptation of religious thought to the widened knowledge and deeper feeling of our age. Be that as it may, it is certain that a great change has come over the preaching of many prominent men in the Baptist and Independent bodies, and it is a change which promises to extend to others, and to deepen where it has already set in.

Again, the Wesleyan body (which is numbered at 30,000,000 in different parts of the world), is congratulated by its leaders on the fact that its founder, whose discourses constitute a doctrinal standard for ministerial candidates, providentially adopted a free tone with regard to the question of Inspiration; and by a large majority a meeting of London ministers, including some of the most prominent in the body, has just authorised the publication of an address by a professor in one of their colleges, in which the new views as to the composition of the Bible were moderately but honestly avowed. Thus it would appear that the contention of leading minds made long ago has at last reached the ears of the ranks. It is no longer left to quasi-independent teachers

like Dean Stanley and Archdeacon Farrar to proclaim the futility of treating the Bible as a sacred book guaranteed against error, and a safe guide to the unwary. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury, in a lecture at Cambridge in the spring of this year, has reiterated the warning that this literature, so long used as a divine oracle, must be judged as its contents warrant; the only revelation for which he holds it responsible being that of the general trend of history and the growth of ideas which it illustrates. I may close this enumeration of points all of the same character, which could be multiplied to almost any extent, with a reference to a trial for heresy, which has just been decided in an ecclesiastical court of the Episcopal Church in one of the United States. A clergyman avowed his disbelief in the Virgin birth and the bodily resurrection of Christ, and was therefore charged with breach of orthodoxy. The court consisted of five members; three decided against the heretic, two were in favour of his continuance in orders! It is abundantly clear that the cause of a Free Theology has been rapidly advanced under the influences which have been described.

A statement of what appear to be the chief practical results of the religious studies and experiences of the age may fittingly conclude the present essay. To seize at once upon the most obvious, attention must be directed to the *Agnosticism* which is manifested on many sides. The term "Agnostic" was introduced by Prof. Huxley as a

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than its external aggrandisement. In short, it may be said that, in spite of the huge accumulation of material prosperity tending to develop selfish luxury, and notwithstanding the unsettling of thought due to the causes which have been described, the public conscience has been quickened in no small degree. The age, it is true, is one of disturbance; but that disturbance is not without hopeful possibilities. The friends of Religion are assuredly not those who seek to minimise the possible results of the discoveries of the age, but those who, appreciating them at their exact value, welcome them for the aid they give in the formation of correct views of the nature and possibilities of our life on earth. The widest tolerance, the freest mental activity, and the devoutest trust in the ultimate triumph of the right and the true—these are the characteristics of those who will most effectively aid the progress of thought.